

BECOMING “COMMUNITY ENGAGED”: ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP,  
THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION, AND TENURE AND PROMOTION  
AT R1 UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation

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JONATHAN SHIPLEY

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Chair of Committee,	Charles R. Conrad
Committee Members,	J. Kevin Barge
	Damion Waymer
	Steven Boivie
Head of Department,	J. Kevin Barge

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## ABSTRACT

In 2006 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching created a new elective classification for institutions of higher education: that of “Community Engagement”. It was the first voluntary classification, and since its release the number of campuses that have been approved as “engaged” institutions has risen to 359 within the United States, and more administrations apply with every iteration. Of those, 61 are R1 institutions, fully 53% of current R1 schools. This dissertation looks at the Carnegie Foundation and its history, including reputation management strategies, the Community Engagement Classification, and the rhetorical strategies implemented in its design. It is also an analysis of public tenure and promotion documents at R1 universities, specifically in how they treat the concepts of engaged scholarship and community engagement.

The Carnegie Foundation actively shapes their reputation and organizational history in order to appear as credible as possible. Currently one of their key accomplishments is that of the Carnegie Classifications of Higher Education, and their identity has become inextricably tied to the system. The release of the new classification has implications on how the Foundation itself is viewed and interacted with. Subsequently, high adoption of the new classification was desirable, not only to focus attention on community engagement (one goal of the release), but also to maintain the credibility of Carnegie and its system of classification. The implementation of strategic

ambiguity has aided in the overall rate of adoption, but it may be a problem for the Foundation in the future.

One of the metrics utilized in the application for the Community Engagement Classification is that of tenure and promotion policies. They play a key factor in whether faculty are encouraged and enabled to reach out to the community as a part of their professional role. R1 universities, even those currently classified as Community Engagement campuses, continue to struggle to validate practices that treat the community as anything more than participants in “discovery” research, a finding that may have significant long-term impacts on both the future of engaged scholarship and the validity of the Carnegie Foundation and their ability to classify institutions of higher education.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### **Contributors**

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Professors Conrad [advisor] and Barge of the Department of Communication, Professor Boivie of the Department of Management, and Professor Waymer of the Department of Liberal Studies at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

All work for the dissertation was completed independently by the student.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1970 the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education began developing a system to categorize colleges and universities within the United States. In 1973 the first Carnegie Classification was published, and has remained one of the most widely used systems of its kind ever since. The program itself analyzes the various campuses based on their own priorities and programs, ranging from specialty campuses and small colleges to large state universities and premier private schools.

In 2006 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching created a new elective classification for institutions of higher education: that of “Community Engagement”. Since that time the number of campuses that have been approved as “engaged” institutions has risen to 359 within the United States, and more administrations apply with every iteration (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). The new classification is the first that allows institutions to self-identify in specific ways and align their image with their mission and practice within academia (Driscoll, 2008).

While others may follow, it remains the only “voluntary” classification that Carnegie has fully developed. Each of the other distinctions that the Carnegie Foundation has created are automatically applied to institutions of higher education. In the Basic Classification, for instance, *all* accredited colleges and universities that grant degrees within the United States are compared and categorized. The Community

Engagement Classification however, is not granted except to institutions that fill out the formal application, submit various documents, and are deemed worthy of the distinction. This added element of effort implies intentionality – truly the only schools classified as Community Engagement campuses are those that desire to be identified as such.

While the overall total may be small when compared to all of the institutions that Carnegie classifies (which is just under 4700, nation-wide), it is telling that among the most visible within the Basic Classification – that of “R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity” campuses – 53% have received the distinction already (61 of 115 total). This number continues to increase with each iteration of the classification, evincing a growing desire among these schools to be identified as Community Engaged campuses.

The emergence of the unique classification and the rising number of campuses identifying with it is telling of the growing focus of universities and colleges to be more relevant within their various communities. Criticisms had arisen throughout the century, questioning whether or not the research efforts made within academia served the general public (Boyer, 1990), and near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a shift toward more problem-based research, grounding discovery in “real-world” issues (Gibbons, 1998). Today, many scholars also feel a responsibility to collaborate with external communities in the mutual generation of knowledge (Van de Ven, 2007). This approach – engaged scholarship – has been advocated for as a part of research, teaching, and service, each with the push to extend the impact of academic pursuits beyond the walls of the institution itself. The new Community Engagement Classification and its adoption seem

to be a continuation of this movement toward even greater relevance within higher education.

The high adoption of the new classification among research universities is interesting because it is precisely within these institutions that academics who consider themselves to be engaged scholars have found the most resistance to their efforts. Some scholars have questioned the motivation behind engagement, arguing that academia should not be trying to change the world (American Academy of Religion, 1995; Fish, 2004), and still others question the effectiveness of collaboration efforts (McKelvey, 2006). Not all of the challenges to engaged scholarship are overt however; the system itself creates barriers to meaningful outreach. The tenure and promotion policies and practices which are established to preserve academic freedom have the effect of insulating scholars from scrutiny and can lead to further detachment (Bok, 1990; 2009). A tenured faculty member is protected in their pursuit of knowledge, and once that status is achieved the impact or relevance of their research is more difficult to call into question, especially by those outside the institution itself. No longer are they answerable to the larger external community, if in fact they ever were in the first place.

Not only do they have the potential to insulate faculty from external criticism, but university tenure structures privilege discovery research above collaboration and engagement. Generally, the primary metric that determines whether or not a faculty member obtains tenure is the quality and quantity of peer-reviewed journal articles, prioritizing projects that yield this result in the shortest amount of time. It has been observed that the impact of this practice does little in terms of outreach (Frey, 2009),

nevertheless, this is the yardstick with which scholarly value tends to be measured. The interplay between traditional reward programs and community engagement efforts draws out two key considerations: 1) Do activities aimed at collaborating with external communities count toward tenure and promotion? 2) If so, what are those activities classified as and how are they evaluated?

Tenure and promotion policies provide guidelines for and set constraints on the academic, and have a real impact on their scholarly activities (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Huber, 2002). The new Carnegie classification was designed in part with the hope that institutions would broaden their reward systems to support greater engagement (Driscoll, 2008), but an analysis conducted three years after the standard was initiated showed that it wasn't drastically changing institutional policy (Driscoll, 2009). This leads one to question the rhetorical significance of the Community Engagement Classification overall – its adoption has been stunning among some of the most prestigious schools nationally, but its impact on community outreach has yet to be proven.

The growth of the new classification calls to question the intent of the institutions that have applied to receive the distinction. If they are genuinely invested in community engagement and other forms of scholarship, then there should be evidence of this in how they reward those activities. If not, then it seems that the Community Engagement Classification must serve some other purpose for the school overall. As mentioned before, the status of Community Engagement as a voluntary classification has to do primarily with image and reputation, indicating that without substantial change the adoption could be merely a public relations/image-management move. The legitimization

and mimesis concepts of institutional theory would suggest this possibility. Mimesis occurs when organizations are more concerned with the appearance of legitimacy (obtained through the public adoption of institutionalized norms) than making any substantive change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). A university could – in theory – capitalize on the efforts and recognition of other universities to be more relevant without adjusting their own practices or policies. This process becomes more likely the longer a new trend has been out and the more ubiquitous it becomes (Westphal, Gulati, & Shortell, 1997; Green, Li, & Nohria, 2009). While it is difficult to assess faculty members' and administrators' intentions, it is possible to assess the extent to which the policies and procedures they create facilitate or limit community engagement overall.

This dissertation is an exploratory effort, so formulating an *a priori* hypothesis is impossible, but aside from institutionalization there are a number of other perspectives on organizational rhetoric that could become useful – strategic ambiguity and image/identity management (Eisenberg, 1984; Sillince & Brown, 2009), for instance, decoupling (Westphal & Zajac, 2001), and even diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2010). The purpose of this dissertation is to look closely at the classification itself in three different ways, each of which aim to answer distinctive questions regarding the Carnegie Foundation itself, the Community Engagement Classification, and the institutions that have been recognized thus far. Each chapter is written as a complete argument to facilitate the transition to publication in the future, which means that although they build on each other, there is some overlap in their treatment of key terms and literature. A brief summary of each is presented here:

## Chapter II: Historical Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to provide a background to the announcement of the new Community Engagement Classification. Generally, how did the Carnegie Foundation become the authoritative voice on university classification? As an organizational scholar I am interested in the Carnegie Foundation as a case study of how an organization can generate such a powerful reputation and keep it despite drastic changes. Because reputation is based on historical interactions with the company (Conrad, 2011), it follows that there should be specific moments (or time periods) where it was generated and then reproduced. A historical account and analysis would help to answer the question of why, when it released the new *voluntary* classification, so many prestigious schools clamored to receive the distinction.

Situating the Carnegie Foundation historically becomes even more informative as we consider the current handling of the classification system. The most recent Carnegie Classifications were published by the Center for Postsecondary Research at the Indiana University School of Education, who were given control from the Carnegie Foundation at the beginning of 2015 and worked closely with them on the 2010 edition. The 2020 application process will be handled by still another group – the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University. These changes make the classification a little more vulnerable to losing credibility, as they are no longer as closely tied to the organization that generated it in the first place. They maintained the Carnegie name, drawing on the reputation and historical significance that I hope to identify in this chapter.

### **Chapter III: Rhetorical Analysis**

The second chapter draws on rhetorical theory in order to analyze the various influences that led to the emergence of the classification, how the Carnegie Foundation framed (and its successors continue to frame) the Community Engagement Classification, as well as how the application process aids in that message. With the metaphor of the ivory tower still used to criticize much of the academic world, the new classification seems an attempt at bridging some of those gaps, and drawing attention to organizations that are making a serious effort in reaching out. Indeed, the designers admitted their desire for these results and more (Driscoll, 2008; 2009) This chapter is a critical-rhetorical perspective on both the message and the process by which Carnegie attempted to establish community engagement as an identifying and unifying factor among institutions of higher education.

By looking at these artifacts through the lens of McGee (1980), Greene (1998), and other rhetorical theorists I will argue that there are times when efforts to change can actually provide the means to mask and perpetuate the status quo. In this way the new Community Engagement Classification has the potential – through its own ambiguity – to further insulate those within academia who have no intention of outreach nor of supporting those who do. The classification was designed “to encompass the broadest conceptions of interactions between higher education and community” (Driscoll, 2009, pg. 6) but that very inclusivity may limit the Carnegie Foundation’s ability to determine which universities are truly committed to engagement. To the extent that institutions can adopt the classification without making substantial changes in their practices or policies,

the distinction itself becomes irrelevant.

#### **Chapter IV: Policy Analysis**

Recognizing that tenure and promotion documents are both a reflection of an academic organization's values and do – in fact – present constraints for their faculty, the third chapter is an analysis of the policies themselves. With over half of the R1 campuses now distinguished as Community Engagement schools, and that group being among the most well-recognized and well-funded of all the basic categories, the documents of these campuses (n=115) will be the subject of the analysis.

The first question I pose within this chapter is whether or not R1 campuses include faculty interactions with the public community in their incentive systems. While interactions with the community were included in Carnegie's initial definition of community engagement (see NERCHE, 2016b), supporting those interactions through tenure and promotion was only one small part of the application and excluding it was not grounds for rejection. Shortly after the implementation of the new classification, the Carnegie Foundation pointed to these guidelines specifically as a weak spot among engagement efforts (Driscoll, 2008). By creating guidelines that promote or ignore relationships with the other spheres, schools enable and/or discourage faculty from participating and engaging them. The second question is related to the first, but is focused around the community's role in knowledge creation and translation efforts: how do those R1 universities which do include engaged scholarship within tenure and promotion guidelines conceptualize it? Engaged scholarship can be enacted in various ways (Van de Ven, 2007; Putnam & Dempsey, 2015), and how it is represented and



recognized can be informative on how universities are dealing with this rising approach to both research and community engagement.

Analyzing the R1 group as a whole also will allow for comparisons along different variables, but the primary concern is whether or not being identified Community Engagement makes any difference in how tenure and promotion policies are designed. This is perhaps the best indicator as to whether or not the classification is having the desired impact, as these policies and practices are a part of the application for the distinction itself (Driscoll, 2008).

Each of these chapters is rhetorically focused: the first aims at uncovering the work Carnegie has done to design their reputation, the second is concerned with the strategies utilized in the creation of the Community Engagement Classification, and the third is an analysis of how universities frame community engagement and engaged scholarship within their public tenure and promotion documents. It is precisely this focus that has been the recent push in institutional theory, as scholars have begun to integrate rhetorical processes and institutionalization (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2009; Lammers, 2011; Suddaby, 2011; Hardy, 2011). The processes of adoption and diffusion, which are at the heart of this dissertation, are laden with rhetorical strategies (Green, 2004), and the Carnegie Foundation has been putting in “institutional work” (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011) to make them more effective. I should find evidence of these and more within each of the proposed projects.

At this point I should clarify – I am in full support of what the Community Engagement Classification represents, as well as the intentions from which it was

created. This dissertation is not a criticism of those things, per se, but rather is a critique of their implementation. The less this classification represents actual change and material distinctions between institutions, the more hollow it becomes. The impact of impotence on the Carnegie Foundation and their classifications is certainly an issue, but greater than that is the question of the future of engaged scholarship and the efforts of community collaboration. Rather than moving academia one step toward relevance, a hollow classification has the potential to mask greater reticence to facilitating anything other than discovery research.

## CHAPTER II

### CARNEGIE FOUNDATION AND CLASSIFICATIONS: WHY DOES *EVERYONE*

#### CARE?

Research, scholarship and creative activity are critical to the mission of the university and to maintaining our current R1 Carnegie Status... (*Provost's memorandum to faculty*, McConnell, 2016)

We have adopted attaining the classification of Research II as an institutional goal... (*Provost's report to Faculty Senate*, McCormick, 2005)

[I]n 1991, [University] reached another milestone by capturing the Doctoral II status, ranking it in solitary second among the state's universities and colleges and recognizing its national competitiveness... (*University website*, McCormick, 2005)

#### **Introduction**

Since 1973 the various sites of higher education within the United States have been categorized by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, a listing organized and controlled by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Today *every* accredited organization that grants higher degrees within the United States is compared and categorized based on empirical information collected by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, and the College Board. These Carnegie Classifications have become one of the key ways that universities identify themselves, especially among the more visible and prestigious campuses in the nation. Notably, these distinctions have even motivated some institutions to adjust their missions and programs in order to obtain what they perceive to be a higher rank (McCormick & Zhao, 2005).

In 2006 the Carnegie Foundation released the new “Community Engagement Classification”, intended to be the first of a number of elective categories that allow universities to further distinguish themselves and their organizational missions (Driscoll, 2008). It required institutions to complete a lengthy application, making a case and providing evidence for an organizational effort directed at connecting with stakeholders outside of academia. Applications were then reviewed by the Foundation itself and were granted or denied the new classification based on the argument presented. Response was positive: within ten years 359 campuses have received the distinction, with each iteration adding more names to the list (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). This total includes 61 R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest high research, the highest classification granted by the Foundation, accounting for 53% of the group, which is only made up of 115 institutions. In fact, the largest schools are the most likely to have applied and qualified for the voluntary classification, as shown in the following table:

**Table II.1. 2015 Community Engagement Classification**

<b>2015 Community Engagement Classification*</b>			
<i>Basic Classification</i>	<i>Community Engagement</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity	61	115	53.0%
Doctoral Universities: Higher Research Activity	50	107	46.7%
Doctoral Universities: Moderate Research Activity	37	113	32.7%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs	91	393	23.2%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs	21	207	10.1%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs	12	141	8.5%
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	45	259	17.4%
Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields	8	324	2.5%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant	2	149	1.3%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's	1	259	0.4%
Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-High Traditional	4	166	2.4%
Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	10	127	7.9%
Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-High Traditional	3	110	2.7%
Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	1	102	1.0%
Associate's Colleges: High Career & Technical-High Traditional	1	87	1.1%
Associate's Colleges: High Career & Technical-High Nontraditional	1	184	0.5%
Special Focus Four-Year: Medical Schools & Centers	4	54	7.4%
Special Focus Four-Year: Other Health Professions Schools	4	261	1.5%
Special Focus Four-Year: Arts, Music & Design Schools	3	137	2.2%

\*Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2016

The reception of the new classification among prestigious research schools is particularly interesting, as it serves to further validate the Carnegie Foundation's authority in maintaining the classification system. These individual universities are some of the most powerful organizations in the nation, controlling endowments in the tens of billions of dollars and the education of tens of thousands of students each year. The larger university systems are even more formidable, and yet both seem beholden to the Carnegie Foundation in both their Basic Classification and the new, voluntary one. Why? What do they have to gain by cooperating with – thus affirming – the Carnegie Classifications?

It would seem that the Carnegie Foundation controls an inordinate amount of power within higher education in the United States. As Foucault (1980) points out, power can only be manifest within action, and the power of the Carnegie Foundation is exerted with each new release of the Carnegie Classifications. It is reified by its acceptance in the Academy, a process that has been ongoing for more than 40 years now. But why was the system adopted in the first place, and why does it continue to be utilized as a guide to university categorization? This chapter is an exploration into the past of the Carnegie Foundation on the Advancement of Teaching to identify how it became an authority on higher education, one that continues to influence the actions and identities of large universities and colleges within the United States. It will look not only at the history itself, but also the Foundation's own use of that history to shape their reputation and credibility.

### **Reputation, History, and Memory**

Reputation is created over time, and is dependent on (and at the mercy of) the memory that people have of an organization (Conrad, 2011). Organizations actively make efforts to shape that memory through their PR practices in order to have some control over their reputation, and the Carnegie Foundation is no exception. This method isn't foolproof – there are vernacular voices that can and sometimes do counter the official narrative (Bodnar, 1992) – but an organization can at least present a consistent account to the public. This uniformity can be seen as similar stories are shared from multiple sources, and is crucial for the official rhetorical narrative to be effective (Lucaites & Condit, 1985).

There are also differences in the relative power of those trying to shape any given conversation (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2000), and the organization itself wields a good amount of power in most cases. They have access to large pools of resources that allow them opportunities to try to control the narrative, but that isn't their only source of power. In fact, frequently the public willingly grants organizations space to formulate their own narrative, empowering them to assume an authoritative role. (Ehrenhaus, 1988). In this way the vernacular (or general, grassroots public) frequently steps aside for the institutional (or official), allowing them a stronger voice in generating memory and thus in shaping reputation. Powerful organizations are enabled by this process to tell their own (positive) version of history.

It is important to recognize that history and memory aren't necessarily the same thing (Nora, 1989); one attempts to claim objective truth based on concrete evidence while the other enjoys an existence perpetuated by subjective lived experience. Because memory is only valuable insofar as it is both reflective of the present and used to inform the present (Zelizer, 1995), frequently there are moments when how we want to remember something becomes the dominant narrative and is taken for objective history (Prosser, 1998). This process is complicated by the fact that memory is of necessity only partial – we can't remember everything, so we pick and choose what is important, and there is an ongoing struggle regarding which aspects are worth preserving and emphasizing (Blair, Dickenson, & Ott, 2010). That struggle is dominated by our current needs for validation; what we and our organizations feel is important becomes the lens through which we select from and shape our past.

The memory that emerges is informative precisely because of this struggle, especially when it is being prescribed by official releases surfacing from an organization. What is presented as historical fact may or may not be empirically verifiable, but it also reflects a rhetorical choice: some details were selected and prioritized over others. Quintillian (1966) points out that the purpose of this rhetorical narrative is “not merely to instruct, but rather to persuade” (Vol. 2, p. 71), implying that an argument is being constructed. The narrative told in official publications and especially on official websites is an illustration of the desired memory an organization wishes to maintain, an attempt at shaping a positive reputation.

The Carnegie Foundation has a number of sources through which they offer a historical narrative of both academia at large and the Foundation itself. These include the websites controlled by the various Carnegie organizations as well as the official publications produced by scholars associated with the Foundation, beginning with Ernest Boyer’s landmark piece in 1990: *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. In the 25 years following that publication there has been consistent narrative in the specific events discussed, beginning with the origin of the Foundation itself, continuing through the changing landscape of scholarship in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and – of course – the development and release of the Carnegie Classifications in the 1970s. It is clear that the Carnegie Foundation sees these events as critical to the reputation of the organization, so each will be analyzed in terms of what happened, how it is discussed, and rhetorical function it might serve as a piece of organizational memory.



## Origin

By the time Andrew Carnegie retired in 1901 at the age of 65 he was the second richest man in the world and had already begun his philanthropic activities in earnest. One of his primary concerns was improving educational opportunities within the United States and around the world. Subsequently, in the first decade or so of the 20<sup>th</sup> century he founded a number of organizations to support this cause. Included among this number was the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which was started in 1905 and chartered in 1906 as a nonprofit corporation by an act of Congress in 1906.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the system of higher education in the United States was a mess – which is to say that there was no real system at all. What did exist was an odd mix of American ingenuity and European traditionalism; there were fewer than 1000 colleges nationwide with an average enrollment of around 160 students, and each approached education from a slightly different perspective. Wealthy families and religious denominations had created many of the existing campuses. For example, many of the other existing institutions had started up with a moral purpose, such as the “charity school that would double as a house of worship” (University of Pennsylvania, n.d.), or the university initially chartered “to encourage and support the principles of religion and morality, and early to place the youth under the forming hand of society, that by instruction, they may be moulded (sic) to the love of virtue and order” (Reed, 1949, p. 17). Second, the relatively recent Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Acts of 1862 and 1890 were still being implemented, creating another approach and execution. The land-grant mission, for instance, was “to teach such branches of learning as are related to

agriculture and mechanic arts... in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (United States Government, 1862).

Still others were military schools, commissioned to train leaders and tacticians for national defense. The only consistency across all universities, it seems, was a focus on undergraduate education. It was not until the late 1800s that U.S. universities even started to build graduate programs, and they had very low enrollment. The majority of college and university professors at the time didn’t have advanced degrees, and very few were trained in research.

The principal motivation for the Carnegie Foundation was that of providing teacher pensions for faculty within institutions of higher education. The “Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching” started with an initial endowment of \$10 million which was augmented soon after (Carnegie listed it at \$15 million in his autobiography, see Carnegie, 1920), but that too proved to be inadequate for its purposes. Within about ten years it was clear that other sources of funding would have to be pursued in order to continue the program. Subsequently, in 1918 the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, or TIAA, was formed through personal donations by Andrew Carnegie and others, as well as grants from the foundation and the Carnegie Corporation. Despite the fact that it emerged from the purpose of the Carnegie Foundation, the TIAA was created as an entirely separate entity from the Foundation itself, and as it has become bigger over the past 100 years it has maintained that independent status.

The role of Carnegie and his Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in establishing the TIAA is leveraged over and over in the efforts of the organization to build their identity. Even in short bios written by the Foundation and other Carnegie organizations attention is given to the role they played (see *Foundation History*, 2016; *Other Carnegie Organizations*, 2016). By sharing the origin story and pointing out the tangible benefits of their work, they painted an image of goodwill and effectiveness – validating not only their ongoing existence, but also their continued attempts at higher education reform. Consider how the specific situation is described way by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2016):

As a trustee of Cornell University, Andrew Carnegie was shocked to learn about the low salary scale of professors. He realized that they were unable to save for their old age and that many were continuing to teach for far too long. Through the Foundation, he endowed a pension system for college teachers. (*Other Carnegie Organizations*)

The organizational narrative is dripping with emotional appeal. It presents a Carnegie concerned with the plight of the faculty, making strides to improve their situation. While it is consistent with Carnegie's (1920) own account, Lucaites and Condit (1985) point out that for a rhetorical narrative to be persuasive it must have an audience in mind; university professors and administrators surely are targeted in this tale. This is understandable, because they remain at the helm of the largest organizations of higher education and have benefited the most from these early efforts of the Foundation. Other references to the Foundation's origin are brief and limit their story

only to the connection with the TIAA, but this particular example frames Carnegie's interest in teaching in terms of the professors' plight.

Ironically, today's tenure systems, combined with laws banning mandatory retirement, encourage and/or allow many professors to postpone retirement as long as they can (Weinberg & Scott, 2013; Marcus, 2015). And while professor salaries and pensions are much better than they were 100 years ago – at least for full-time, tenured faculty at top universities – higher education itself isn't immune to some of the same issues here in the United States. Teacher salaries continue to be low throughout primary and secondary education, and adjunct instructors at the college level are paid very little for the classes they direct. The memory, therefore, continues to be relevant to the present, and the Foundation's "heroic" role is important to their continued value and credibility as an organization today.

### **Shift**

Around the time that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was started there was an ongoing shift of focus at institutions of higher education. Most campuses at that time had been established for the instruction of students, but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century service had arisen as a companion to teaching (Boyer, 1990). Notably, this "service" was less concerned with the inner workings of the university (as it is at large universities today) but rather dealt with knowledge translation to outside communities, both public and private. It was chiefly concerned with applying theoretical knowledge to practice, and carried academic expertise outward from the university. Land grant universities were especially committed to this outreach.

As other faculty activities began to be evaluated alongside instruction, campuses started to hire educators who could demonstrate varied skill sets within academia. Researchers were hired alongside teachers, and graduate degrees became more prevalent among faculty. As universities gathered experts in the various fields to instruct their classes, the pursuit of knowledge gradually became an end unto itself. In 1906 the term “research” was first introduced in the United States as a pillar of higher education by Daniel C. Gilman (as cited in Wegener, 1978), and it quickly rose to prominence there. Graduate schools blossomed across the nation as students pursued higher degrees, and the benefit of the knowledge gleaned within the halls of academia became obvious through developments in medicine and other technologies.

By the end of the Second World War discovery research had become the primary focus of the prominent universities across the nation, and faculty at those schools were evaluated chiefly (if not solely) on their research productivity and publication (Lynton & Elman, 1987). Two possible motivations for this shift stand out: First, the organizational culture of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was focused on efficiency and metrics – what could not be measured was not valued. This industrial approach could have had an impact on academic life, as it was (and will always be) easier to justify tenure on the basis of tangible publications rather than public impact. The second motivation is that of the nature of the system itself – journals became more costly and difficult for the general public to access and more detailed in their expectations (Weiner, 2001). Translation efforts, then, became more onerous as articles were less reflective of popular texts. With

outreach more difficult and academic publication rewarded, discovery research took a dominant role in higher education.

Specialization also had an impact on teaching and service. As university missions shifted to focus primarily on research and publication teaching was reduced to mere knowledge transfer, concerned with scientific advancement rather than morality and citizenship. Service was already evaluated based on theoretical and practical value, so the shift of focus to research was more an evolution and specialization of service, rather than a new metric entirely. Interestingly, service was preserved as a separate pillar but became the chief casualty in the shift – it became more ambiguous and grew to include all outreach activities that didn't qualify as focused teaching and/or research. Later on it would evolve further to include internal service performed for the benefit of the university itself.

While Boyer laments these shifts as a wholesale movement, it is notable that the Foundation itself was drawn along with the new changes. The organization started as the name suggests – seeking to improve teaching; shortly after the initial endowment the Carnegie Foundation dedicated itself to determining standards for education overall. The first notable endeavor was performed in 1908 and published two years later by Abraham Flexner, examining medical schools within the United States and Canada and their effectiveness in training future physicians. The Flexner Report was a lengthy critique of the issues he found, including programs that practiced problematic science initiatives such as electrotherapy and others that awarded medical students degrees after around two years without any lab experience (Flexner, 1910).

Only a handful of the 155 medical schools that Flexner analyzed were praised for their performance, and he offered a series of recommendations. The suggestions largely involved toughening prerequisites for entering the field requiring medical schools to provide hands-on experience as an integral part of the programs. But Flexner didn't stop there. He called for a reduction in the number of medical schools, for increased regulation, and supported scientific approaches to practice, involving collaborative research with faculty (Flexner, 1910). In this way the Carnegie Foundation not only became directly involved in program standards, but also began to adopt a focus on research within academia. The Report had a massive impact on the field overall, drastically changing the system of medical education; it continues to affect programs today.

The Carnegie Foundation persisted in its goal of improving teaching around the nation, but as research became more pronounced within the system of higher education they, too, shifted. Consider this statement from the Carnegie Corporation (2016): “(The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching) later went on to establish the first widespread educational standards for the nation’s colleges and universities. After 1931, the foundation changed its focus, concentrating on research to improve education” (*Other Carnegie Organizations*). The Carnegie Foundation’s standardization efforts began to emphasize the value of research within higher education with a turn toward graduate programs. Their key role in the creation of the Educational Testing Service (another lauded accomplishment), for instance, was the development and implementation of the Graduate Record Examination, or GRE, while other organizations

generated undergraduate testing. These initiatives supported the growing research trend while also emphasizing their focus on educational enhancement. Throughout it all they took an approach to research that was decidedly teaching focused, but also provided for the shifting priorities of academia.

The shift from teaching to service to research has been an interesting one, especially for the Foundation itself. From their own statements it is clear that although they were not opposed to an emphasis in research at some schools (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1971), they largely rejected the idea that all higher education should hinge on research as its fundamental function (see Boyer, 1990; Shulman, 2001; McCormick & Zhao, 2005). Their support of other reward systems and educational approaches is crucial to their continued success with the Classifications themselves, since only 335 of the classified campuses are Doctoral Universities, accounting for less than 10% of the total. By emphasizing the roots of higher education in America they provide a viable defense of teaching and service structures and establish the Foundation's own justification of authority within those institutions as well.

### **Classification**

The Carnegie Foundation's emphasis on institutional diversity within higher education becomes even more pronounced in the discussion of the Carnegie Classifications themselves. In 1967 the Carnegie Foundation created a subgroup – the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education – “to study and make recommendations regarding the major issues facing U.S. higher education” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, p. 51). Quickly it became painfully obvious however, that the various college and



universities faced very different problems depending on the programs they offered, their size, and their missions. In order to address this issue and aid in their own research the group decided to create a classification system that would allow them to group the institutions based on the types (and quantity) of degrees awarded, size, funding, and focus. The project began in earnest in 1970.

This wasn't the first attempt of its kind, but it was the most extensive. Prior to the development of the Carnegie Classification system there were efforts made to categorize colleges and universities, but they were bulky and focused mainly on public/private status, highest degrees offered, and whether or not they were accredited (Douglass, 2005). The federal government also generated a new report in the 1960s titled the Higher Education General Information Survey, but it was unable to analyze the various campuses in an effective way without more defined distinctions. The Carnegie Foundation learned from the previous attempts of others, and forged ahead independently, driven by their desire to facilitate their ongoing research projects. When the Carnegie report finally was published in 1973 it sported six main groups, each with subcategories, amounting to 19 different classifications under which they placed every accredited institution of higher education in the nation.

Douglass (2005) notes that not everyone was happy with the new system, however – as with any attempt to classify or categorize others there are those that resist the label. This is especially true when that label is handed out by a third party and is automatically applied to all institutions. Chief among those opposed to the new system were institutions that had ambitions to expand their program offerings and others that

feared that the classification would impact their ability to access critical funding. The Carnegie Commission sidestepped this opposition with two primary arguments, implementing an enduring rhetoric that continues to be utilized today:

- First, they emphasized that the classification was simply a time-sensitive reflection of a few years of collected data – they were willing to reassess and proved that by releasing a full revision of the classification report in 1976. In subsequent years they have not only reassessed the institutions themselves, but also the metrics by which they have made their distinctions (Shulman, 2001). As an acknowledgement of the limitation of time-bound data, disclaimers continue to appear in the rhetoric surrounding the classification, as illustrated in this statement in the most recent revision: “Classifications are time-specific snapshots of institutional attributes and behavior based on 2013-14 data” (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2016).
- Second, they were explicit that the categorization was not meant to establish a hierarchy of quality, but rather a grouping of like-minded organizations that celebrated the diversity of the same (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2016). This rhetoric was not only present in the classifications and their justification, but also prevalent in other correspondence emerging from the Carnegie Commission themselves. For instance, in their 1971 report regarding the development of the future of higher education in America they stated, “We find no need whatsoever in the foreseeable future for any more research-type universities granting the PhD” (Carnegie Commission on Higher

Education, 1971). Later in the same report they argued for “increasing the diversity of institutions by type and by program [and] resisting homogenization.” Since that time they have been outspoken against the tendency of universities to read into their report as a celebration of the high research, large university model of R1 schools. That their classification system has influenced institutions to mimic the largest campuses has led them to label the effect as “pernicious” (Shulman, 2001, p. viii), and “iron(ic)” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, p. 52).

Despite the opposition many within the academic community readily accepted the classification system, especially – unsurprisingly – the most prestigious universities, which found themselves categorized among others with strong reputations (McCormick & Zhao, 2005). Not only were they pleased to find themselves clustered at the “top”, but it had been done by an organization that was well-known and respected for its interactions thus far within higher education. Thus, the institutions that could have caused the most trouble for the Carnegie Commission and Foundation were those that were the most supportive of the new Carnegie Classification system, and others followed in suit.

Aside from the support of the larger campuses, the classifications still remained the most extensive and inclusive system constructed; it was difficult to reject outright (although there were some with specific complaints), and it was adopted quickly outside the university system as both government and private organizations saw its value. It was taken up “by institutional personnel, state systems, foundations, membership organization, news magazines, and others” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, pg. 52), and the

reputation of the Carnegie Foundation as an organization concerned with the issues of higher education and proven to be effective in addressing them aided in adoption efforts. The use and reuse of the system inside and outside of academia added to its staying power. The Carnegie Commission was dissolved after seven years of service, but the classification program carried on under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation and continued to gain recognition across the country.

Today the creation of the Carnegie Classifications is lauded on nearly every site that mentions even a partial history of the Carnegie Foundation (see *Foundation History*, 2016; *Other Carnegie Organizations*, 2016). This is not surprising due to the impact that it has had on institutions of higher education, but it does put the Foundation in an interesting position because of the unintended consequences they have seen. For instance, its adoption as a hierarchical value structure by more than a few institutions has been an ongoing frustration for the Foundation for years. The initial report “urged ‘preserving and even increasing the diversity of institutions of higher education by type and by program [and] resisting homogenization’” (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, pg. 52), but organizations continue to use the system to provide benchmarks for moving up toward R1 status. The Carnegie Foundation is largely helpless to protect against universities utilizing their system to justify these ambitions, as they rely on the validity of the program itself. If the classification system is to continue as the primary way that universities identify themselves, then it has to be recognized and supported within the publications emerging from the Foundation, but such actions galvanize further efforts by institutions to be placed in the “top” groups.

Here we have a classic example of how official memory and vernacular memory can be at odds. Through repeated publications the Carnegie Foundation has emphasized how the classification system celebrates the diversity of the various campuses across the nation (see Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1971; Shulman, 2001; McCormick & Zhao, 2005), but it continues to be used as a marker for excellence, with large doctoral universities with high research activity at the top. Bodnar (1992) points out that the vernacular voice is “preoccupied... with defending the interests and rights of their respective social segments” (p. 16), and even though we are dealing with institutions and not individuals, the motivations seem to be the same.

The key difference here is that the colleges and universities that most benefit from the hierarchical use of the classifications are also those that were the strongest supporters of the system at the beginning, and happen to be among the most powerful academic institutions in the nation. Their images are strengthened by the peer group in which they are situated; the reputations of schools at the top are bolstered by association with other prestigious institutions. They also gain from the comparison with those below, as the Carnegie Foundation provides an objective, third party record that validates doctoral (and R1) universities’ own assertions of superiority.

### **Community Engagement**

The desire among large, influential schools for the Carnegie Classifications to continue to define higher education may be at the heart of why the reception for the new, voluntary classification has been so positive. As shown previously, prestigious schools have been the primary applicants to be distinguished as Community Engagement

campuses. And although the administrators of the elective classification are explicit that “(it) is not an award” (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2016), the adoption among universities does feel like another feather to put in their hats. Consider these statements made by recipients on their official websites:

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has selected [the University] to receive its prestigious Community Engagement Classification...

The honor acknowledges [the University’s] “dynamic and noteworthy” community outreach efforts... (The University of Texas San Antonio, n.d.)

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification... is the highest standard of recognition for community engagement efforts at institutions of higher education.

(The University of Iowa, 2016)

...It is the prevalence of [community engagement] work that has earned the university the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification for the second time... With this year’s award, [the University] will retain the designation until 2025. (Louisiana State University, 2015).

Not only do they benefit from the Carnegie reputation, but also from the others included in the list. The same process that occurred with the initial releasing of the basic classifications is currently playing out with the new elective one, as the credibility of the Community Engagement Classification becomes bolstered the more it is utilized by other, strong institutions.

So maybe it isn’t that the Carnegie Foundation currently controls a huge amount of power within higher education, but that it inadvertently identified and then was

adopted by a select group of powerful organizations. Certainly its history – especially its creation – helped in that process, and the repetition of those memories solidifies its valued status. Shils (2006) pointed out that the most enduring memories are those repeated over time, a process that the Classification system has both enjoyed and struggled with for 40 years, as some institutions have adopted and supported it while still others criticized and denounced it. The official Carnegie repetition, analyzed here, seems to serve as only a small part of the historical memory, especially when looking at the classifications themselves.

The impact the system has had on how higher education is evaluated – one that the Foundation itself has denounced multiple times – is less a product of the Carnegie reputation and emerged more from a concerted effort among prestigious universities to validate what they perceive to be an enviable status. The Carnegie Classification system, which surely relied on the Foundation's expertise and experience in the beginning, has largely taken on a life of its own – as evidenced by Carnegie's futile attempts to curtail what they see as negative effects. What appears to be the power of the Foundation is actually evidence that it no longer rests in their hands; the system they created and the positive reputation of the Foundation itself have become tools used to validate some of the strongest institutions of higher education.

## CHAPTER III

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A NEW FACE FOR THE “IVORY TOWER”

Higher education institutions require a variety of missions and need to cater to a range of stakeholders. The core business of higher education will remain teaching and scholarship, and, in an increasingly complex and volatile global environment, *the relevance of their activities to local communities will become all the more important* (Meek & Davies, 2009, emphasis added)

#### Introduction

Since 2006 the Carnegie Foundation has had a new elective classification for institutions of higher education: that of “Community Engagement”. In nine years the growing tally of campuses that have been approved has risen to 359 within the United States (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015). The move was to be the first among others taken by the Carnegie Foundation to allow institutions to self-identify with categories that defined them in specific ways and aligned with their mission and practice within academia (Driscoll, 2008). To date the Community Engagement Classification remains the only voluntary distinction that the Carnegie Foundation offers.

The emergence of the classification and the number of campuses identifying with it is telling of a steadily growing response to pressure on universities and colleges to be more relevant within their various communities. While the overall total may be small in comparison to all of the institutions that Carnegie classifies, it is telling that among the most visible within the Basic Classification – that of R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity, 53% have received the distinction already (61 of 115 total). Yet to be



determined, however, is whether providing this new classification is having an impact on efforts made by campuses to connect with their communities or whether it enables some institutions to paint on a new (socially acceptable) face and continue the same practices they were pursuing before the new classification emerged.

This chapter will look at the various influences that led to the emergence of the classification, how the Carnegie Foundation framed (and continues to frame) the classification, as well as how the application process aids in that message. This study is a critical-rhetorical perspective on both the message and the process by which Carnegie attempted to establish community engagement as an identifying and unifying factor among institutions of higher education. By looking at these artifacts through the lens of McGee, Greene, and other rhetorical theorists I will argue that there are times when positive efforts can result in an ambiguity that potentially masks immobility. In the case of Carnegie and their new classification, the results may be a co-option of community engagement to placate some while simply justifying more rooms within the ivory tower.

### **The “Ivory Tower” and the “Real World”**

For years now academia has been criticized of isolationism and irrelevance. The concept of ivory tower is an old one and has been applied to academics, writers, actors, and musicians as well. Miriam-Webster defines the term as “a place or situation in which people make and discuss theories about problems (such as poverty and racism) without having any experience with those problems” (n.d). It signifies a self-ascribed distance from the general population, a separation of the privileged from the life experienced by the rest of humanity. For the system higher education in the United States, where

research and theory development remain the chief goals, the ivory tower metaphor signifies not only that “the overall work of the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation’s most pressing civic, social, economic, and moral problems” (Boyer, 1996, pg. 23), but that its members might not even be asking questions that would lead to relevant solutions (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006).

This criticism has been aimed at academics for a few different reasons, one of which being that in the pursuit of academic freedom, our tenure and promotion practices insulate us from outside scrutiny and can lead to detachment (Bok, 1990; 2009). It hasn’t helped that historically those that have held power and flourished in academia have been older, upper-class white men, a group perceived to be out of touch with other walks of life (Trueba, 1998). Tenure and promotion is a double-edged sword, however, because it has real impact on the actions that faculty members do with their research (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Huber, 2002; Driscoll, 2009). Within the guidelines of tenure and promotion are clear distinctions about the value of certain activities over others, usually in regard to the common three-fold distinction of research, teaching, and service. The Basic Carnegie classifications are associated with some of these constraints – one can imagine that a research university would prioritize its activities differently than a small Master’s college or a liberal arts campus.

Not all priorities are made equal, however. The institutions that consistently get ranked highest on quality and funding are generally the large research institutions, and while scholarship can take a number of different forms, primarily since World War II traditional “discovery” research in the laboratory has been given the greatest value

through the reward systems of tenure and promotion (Boyer, 1990). The other types of scholarship – Boyer defines them as integration, or the cross-collaboration between different academic disciplines, teaching, the sharing of knowledge within the classroom, and application, the use of theory to directly impact practice – have all taken a secondary place to publications as a means of assessing scholarly value and impact. Impact, then, becomes the key phrase; if your work gets taken up and quoted within the academic community it is good work. This, of course, ignores the fact that we produce much, much more than we could ever take in, and even scholars have been critical of the real impact that we are having.

If one wonders at the persistence of the ivory tower criticism of academia, one only needs look as far as our system of publication. Now, I should be clear that I understand there must be measures and evaluation tools, and the publication system provides just that, but there are some limitations that we sometimes ignore: Frey (2009) questions the impact of the studies being performed as he points out that of the 15,000 journals that exist, the average number of articles each scholar reads each year is only 191 (a “liberal estimate”, he claims, pg. 206). There is much overlap within disciplines as well (certain articles get read thousands of times, others maybe receive a cursory glance), and *we are the primary audience*. Journals are expensive to subscribe to and generally restricted from the public, so unless an author makes a deliberate effort to take their work beyond academic publication, there is only a small chance it will impact a lay audience. And while some question whether this is a bad thing at all, arguing that it isn’t our place to change the world around us (American Academy of Religion, 1995; Fish,

2004), others have pushed to do more.

In the last 25 years or so there has been an emergence of scholars working to blend the various approaches in an effort to meld academic theory with real world practice. Boyer added the scholarship of engagement to his list of academic practices (1997), and others began to argue for it as valued practice. Among the notable efforts are those of Participatory Action Research (Whyte, 1991), Action Research (Stringer, 2013), and Engaged Scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007), all of which push scholars to work within communities and do rigorous research that also makes a difference in industry and society at large. The aim of engaged scholarship generally is to use theory to enrich projects in partnership with practitioners that improve both the specific practice and the theories themselves (Boyer, 1996; Van de Ven, 2007). These efforts are time consuming, however, and the metrics which apply to scholars doing discovery research (the frameworks of which are located in tenure and promotion documents) struggle to take these things into account (Barge, & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008). This has created various challenges for researchers seeking to make an impact that bridges the public and academic spheres.

Engagement can also take place within the classroom, as noted by Boyer's scholarship of teaching (1990). Simpson (2000) points to the scholarly impact that teaching has, and compares the review processes that are common in teaching to other types of scholarship. Frey (2009) points out that we still make a significant impact on the community from within the classroom, and that there are opportunities for engaging with an even broader community as we instruct and impact students based from and through

the other research being done. Service learning opportunities are another way to blend the scholarship of teaching and application and get students integrated into the outside community in an engaged approach (McPherson, 1997).

It should be noted that while there have been impassioned calls for more engagement made from within academia (Boyer, 1996; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006; Hartnett, 2010), this movement isn't without its critics. Even those who generally accept and promote engaged scholarship are aware of the potential complications and implications regarding those who perform this type of work (Frey & SunWolf, 2009; Gunn & Lucaites, 2010). Blending science with practice has consequences and responsibilities that scholars need to be aware of and accountable for. Questions have also arisen over the term itself; Applegate noted that the general concept is "easily misunderstood":

Some relegate it to the weak and ill-defined "service" area in the holy academic trinity of teaching, research, and service. Others mistake it for volunteerism or political activism. Engaged research is sometimes equated with traditional notions of applied research, irrelevant to anyone doing what they see as more prestigious basic research. (2002, pg. 404)

Those familiar with Burke (1966) rightly have asked the question as to whether or not the framing of this work implies something about research that isn't engaged – would we consider it isolated? Disinterested? Perhaps some projects could be classified as such, but nothing in the literature of engaged scholarship indicates that discovery research shouldn't continue or be valued. Programs that enables engaged scholarship

need not take away from the systems that are already in place which benefit the traditional approach to research.

### **A New Classification**

As a scholar-in-training seeking to do engaged work, the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification is exciting to me, as it signifies an institutional shift that reflects some of the values I share. It can be seen as a reaction to the efforts of engaged scholars in communication and other fields, but it attempts to do more than that. It is a performative action (Austin, 1975) that hoped to encourage and enable scholarship that integrated with the surrounding communities (Driscoll, 2009). The naming of a group of institutions as Community Engagement campuses officially identified an image and a mission that resonated with various campuses across the nation. Whether they carried that title before the announcement or whether the classification defined them is irrelevant (Derrida, 1986), but the fact that every year more universities and colleges are applying for the qualification and receiving the label is indicative of the value of this shared identity.

It isn't as if this identity is completely uniform, however. The symbolic nature of the words we use and the way in which those words are not intrinsically tied to a real thing (Saussure & Baskin, 2011), allow for slippage of meaning (Derrida, 1977). Universities are nesting pots of ambiguity – indeed, any large organization that hopes to thrive veils itself in vagueness when discussing things like mission and purpose (Matland, 1995). Official documents at institutions of higher education are processes of negotiation between multiple invested parties with varying ideologies (Connell &

Galasiński, 1998; Weick, 1976); a statement that makes everyone happy but doesn't commit to too much of anything is valuable to enable a raft of activities that can be justified under the general flag.

The creation and interpretation of these statements by university administrators and faculty is also subject to the context under which they are being utilized. Pressures both internally and externally shift as time progresses, which may cause a college or university to shift their mission, or – more commonly – reinterpret the meaning to conform to new demands. In Boyer's (1990) own discussion of scholarship he illustrates how the purposes of higher education have shifted a number of times in the last 200 years, gradually moving from a primary focus on teaching to service and outreach and eventually to discovery research as the institutional benefits – both in terms of prestige and funding – oriented themselves around the pursuit of knowledge. Subsequently, the reward programs for faculty were shifted to mimic these new goals, and scholarly activity became defined in terms of academic publications. These changes occurred without any sort of official change to the missions or purpose statements within the organizations overall; clearly context has a direct impact on interpretation and implementation.

To say that the creation of the Community Engagement Classification unified a group of institutions would also be to ignore the ambiguity already available in the terms themselves. The choice of “community” and “engagement”, as well as the definition of the combined term by Carnegie has made the interpretation of the classification even more broad: “Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of

higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (NERCHE, 2016b). In her description of the process that led to this specific definition, Driscoll explicitly states,

The term *community engagement* was intentionally selected for the classification to encompass the broadest conception of interactions between higher education and community and to promote inclusivity. The definition of *community engagement* used for the classification also represents broad thinking about collaborations between higher education and the community and intentionally encourages important qualities such as mutuality and reciprocity. (2009, pg. 6)

By selecting signifiers that were already loosely connected with abstract concepts, the Carnegie Foundation opened the doors for the largest possible group of stakeholders to identify with them. Driscoll praises and then laments this freedom in her paper. Her first response to the original group of Community Engagement institutions was that “as hoped and expected, the seventy-six institutions documented widely varied approaches to community engagement” (2009, pg. 8). These varied approaches were a benefit – it proved that the classification had the potential to draw a diverse group that all wanted to identify with the values it held. However, diversity also had its drawbacks:

All institutions described faculty development support for community engagement, but few documented that the work was a priority in their recruitment and hiring practices. When these gaps—lack of reward and recognition and lack of priority in hiring—are viewed in the context of a strong



set of foundational indicators (for example, mission, budget, infrastructure), the inconsistency is disturbing (2009, pg. 10)

With no real shift in policy or uniformity in execution the commitment toward the Carnegie Foundation's idea of community engagement seems hollow, but in retrospect this problem is understandable. "Community" and "engagement" are akin to McGee's concept of the ideograph: "language imperatives which hinder and perhaps make impossible "pure thought"", and which "are bound within the culture they define" (1980, pg. 9). These terms were specifically chosen because of their ability to transcend institutional lines and *mean* something (and perhaps something different) to each. Using McGee's definition, ideographs are "language imperatives" because when discussing our system of higher education we conceive of it to be situated as a part of and yet aside from the community at large.

As McGee asserts, ideographs are "the species of "God" or "Ultimate" term... meant to be purely descriptive of an essentially human condition" (1980, pgs. 7-8). They are culturally understood, rather than easily defined. Laclau (2000) describes terms used in just such a way as we have here to be "empty signifiers", or words which we assume have some inherent meaning but who have very nearly lost their significance entirely:

What, however, about the structure of the equivalential discourses which would enable the emergence of new collective wills? If the equivalential chains extend to a wide variety of concrete demands, so that the ground of equivalence cannot be found in the specificity of any one of them, it is clear that the resulting collective will will find its anchoring point on the level of the social imaginary,

and the core of that social imaginary is what we have called empty signifiers. It is the empty character of these anchoring points that truly universalizes a discourse, making it the surface of inscription of a plurality of demands beyond their particularities. And, as an emancipatory discourse presupposes the aggregation of a plurality of discrete demands, we can say that there is no true emancipation except in a discourse whose anchoring terms remain empty. It is not necessary that the term does not have a precise meaning, in as much as there is a gap between its concrete content and the set of equivalential meanings associated with it. (2000, pg 210)

The essence of what Laclau is stating here is that as people attempt to create some shared discourse through communication that is beholden to the demands of the developers. As those demands become more numerous and more varied, ambiguity is utilized as an effort to meet them to the best degree possible. This watering down of the discourse allows it to be universal and also enables it to truly embody the emancipatory intent of the creation – the terms called upon to drive the new discourse are empty, enabling a truly pluralistic interpretation of the discourse overall. Those who utilize the new discourse are free to justify nearly everything they desire in the application of terms which are agreed upon and yet remain undefined and obscure.

Community is all around us and helps us define who we are and the role we play. It also lends itself to a discussion about engagement – if you perceive to be a part of a larger community you can only make that a reality by taking part in that community. Each of the terms, however, are abstract terms that hold different meaning dependent on

the cultural symbols to which they are attached. As separate entities within a huge system, universities and colleges each have their own linguistic relationships tied to community (i.e. if they are separate from or integrated into the community, whether they are a community unto themselves, etc), and others tied to engagement. So while Carnegie opened the door for a plethora of interpretations, they may have gotten more than they asked for. While it allowed them to include and involve a larger group of universities initially, it also may have defined them out of a clear goal.

The processes of selecting ambiguity for the purposes of inclusion are exactly what the Community Engagement Classification was supposed to do for the institutions who received it. For those that are invested in engagement but frustrated with the systems that constrain its validity, this was seen as potential vindication. Driscoll (2008) states that “the enthusiastic response to the new classification signaled the eagerness of institutions to have their community engagement acknowledged with a national and publicly recognized classification” (pg. 39). It was liberating to be justified, but that feeling alone cannot move the various pieces that hold up the system overall. With a “new collective will” (Laclau, 2000) united around a concept that has lost its impetus, the policies that motivated the announcement are not very likely to shift. This immobility is an obstacle for the Carnegie Foundation, as one of the three goals of the new classification was to “Honor institutions’ achievements while promoting the ongoing development of their programs” (Driscoll, 2008, pg. 39). It shouldn’t be enough for Carnegie to simply identify institutions that find value in the classification itself; they expected more.

### **“A Wide Variety of Concrete Demands”**

Laclau’s (2000) definition holds more for us to look into as far as the implementation of the classification is concerned. As mentioned previously, the Community Engagement Classification is unique in that it is voluntary, requiring that institutions complete an application and go through a vetting process to be cleared to receive it. Many of the first campuses to respond to the Carnegie Foundation in regard to the classification’s inauguration simply weren’t ready for the task of bringing everything together – 20% (18 of 107) couldn’t mobilize the resources quickly enough to make it into the first pool, and still others were denied after (Driscoll, 2008). The application is lengthy – sixteen pages – and involved – an institution with responses to each item would be answering up to fifty 500-word questions (NERCHE, 2016a). In order to complete the process Carnegie offers the following advice:

Because this is an institutional classification, evidence for community engagement often comes from many parts of the campus as well as from community partners. Campuses that have been successful in achieving the classification report that it has been highly beneficial to form a cross-institutional team with community representation to work on the application (NERCHE, 2016b)

It’s unsurprising that an entire team would be required to compile and write up the application due to its length and scope. It spends no time delving to the heart of the issue either; the application begins by requiring the institution to put its mission statement or vision and state whether or not “community engagement is a priority”

(NERCHE, 2016a). From there it covers questions of identity, incentives, measures, infrastructure, funding, impact, and policy regarding community engagement, and requires evidence from official documents on many of the responses.

This range of items only amplifies the emptiness of the “community engagement” signifier (Laclau, 2000). While the necessity to extend the vetting process to be a comprehensive view of the institution is understandable, every item adds to the complexity of prioritizing items. Not only that, but the development group within the Carnegie Foundation couldn’t come to a consensus on the relative importance of the issues, and had to negotiate around their differences of opinion regarding specific questions:

There was also dissent among the pilot institutions about some indicators: search and recruitment policies and practices that support hiring of faculty with expertise and commitment to community engagement, and promotion and tenure policies that reward the scholarship of engagement. A number of representatives in the pilot study supported those indicators for the classification but simultaneously acknowledged that their own campuses could not qualify with such a requirement. (Driscoll, 2009, pg. 7)

The challenge of including difficult metrics that might eliminate primary candidates was answered by lowering the standard for acceptance. Each of these items made it into the final documentation required for the application, but with dissent among the arbiters of the classification, it’s no wonder that the institutions also differed in their approaches. As I previously pointed out, Driscoll (2009) is also quick to admit that many

of the institutions that were awarded the classification did not actually have everything in place that Carnegie would have liked to see. She specifically mentions three areas which presented challenges to the growth of community engagement overall: defining what would count as engaged scholarship, policies affecting the scholarly activities of faculty, and communication with the community, both in the short and long terms. The first two are precisely the areas that have the most impact on faculty decision-making regarding accepted practices (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994; Huber, 2002), and the third is symptomatic of the “ivory tower” mentality both from within the university and from without (Driscoll, 2008). Without the structures in place to continue lasting relations with the outside community they are prone to dissipate. Her explanation of what they received in the applications is telling:

But most institutions could only describe in vague generalities how they had achieved genuine reciprocity with their communities. Again, community involvement requires new understanding, new skills, and even a different way of conceptualizing community. There are generally significant barriers left over from both internal and external perceptions of the campus as an “ivory tower,” and those barriers must be addressed for authentic community partnerships to develop. (2008, pg. 41)

Each of the challenges identified by Driscoll stands as a hefty barrier to truly engaged work and collaboration with the community. However, not all of the institutions fell short, and of course those that received the classification had been able to demonstrate their commitment in many of the key areas. That they did this in some

selected areas but not others is problematic, however. It is important to point out that the challenges are an expression of Laclau's idea that "the ground of equivalence cannot be found in the specificity of any one of (the wide variety of concrete demands)", which results in the abstraction of the "anchoring point" of the "collective will" (2000, pg. 210). No one thing can clearly tie the Community Engagement institutions together, as they each have a claim on the meaning and interpretation of the larger idea. The Carnegie Foundation was sure to face some resistance to substantial change, because they initially allowed institutions to receive the classification without a fulfillment of all of the various areas. Their suggestions for improvement are hollow (or "empty") when in the same motion they grant the title to organizations with obvious shortcomings in their applications. On top of this, Carnegie maintained the value equivalence of the various approaches to community engagement by "[encompassing] the broadest conception of interactions between higher education and community and [promoting] inclusivity" (Driscoll, 2009, pg. 6). This approach undermines any future attempt by the Carnegie Foundation at creating a clear standard for excellence in community engagement.

Now, Carnegie did in fact deny a number of applications, both in the initial classification and in the subsequent iterations in 2008 and 2015, and there were even some institutions that were dropped from the classification, failing the re-application process, but the numbers are small in comparison to the increasing number that do make it in (NERCHE, 2016c). When looking at the variety and diversity included in those that hold the distinction, it's unclear as to what disqualified other institutions from making

the cut. Driscoll and Carnegie are both completely silent regarding the specific qualities of those not receiving the classification, providing no clues as to where the lines were drawn. This absence of a clear standard set in the first couple years has now become the precedent by which universities justify themselves today, and those systems become increasingly difficult to change.

### **Unintended Consequences**

Greene (1998) posited that rhetoric can be used as a “technology of deliberation”, meaning that the way in which we talk about things can become the apparatus by which governing bodies judge and police a population and their actions. He further stated that “rhetorical practices stabilize meaning by distributing populations, discourses and institutions onto the terrain of a governing apparatus” (pg. 30). As standards get established, they not only serve as a metric for their subject matter, but the ideas they represent also become more formulated and normalized. Through this lens we can see where some of the challenges of the Carnegie Foundation are emerging from. The rhetorical practices of the Carnegie Foundation consist of (but aren’t necessarily limited to):

- 1). the identification of the terms “community” and “engagement” as ideographs  
broad enough to embrace a variety of interpretations,
- 2). the selection of a “wide variety of concrete demands” included within the  
application and muddled through in the vetting process, and
- 3). the acceptance and validation of diverse institutional strategies for  
approaching both community and engagement.



The danger with having implemented these strategies is that the systems of judgment lined out through rhetorical practices move from being constitutive of a governing body to becoming the system through which that governing body must respond in the future (Greene, 1998). The persuasive tactics that build the apparatus become the yardstick against which even the creators must be answerable. So when Carnegie creates a classification of universities that feel the necessity to unite themselves with the message of community engagement, and then go through the efforts to filter (and also validate) the various approaches to community engagement there are unintended consequences that threaten the forward motion of the movement.

The question too could be asked as to whether or not Carnegie has the power or authority to validate this research at all. Are they a governing body with the ability to create and impose their own conceptions of community engagement? Are universities answerable to them in any way apart from the titles themselves? Foucault (1980) reminds us that “(power) only exists in action” (pg. 89), so the act and subsequent submission of campuses to put themselves through the vetting process realizes and confirms the power Carnegie has – the value institutions still place on the classifications granted by Carnegie is still high enough to justify the process.

This process of maintaining power and relevance reveals how vulnerable an organization like Carnegie can be, however. The execution of this particular classification is particularly troubling in terms of long-term credibility for the organization. Clear, consistent metrics allow for an argument to be made regarding accuracy and validity; without them the process is muddled and the results of that

process can be strongly refuted and questioned. By designing a technology (using Greene's terminology) that proves itself ineffective in establishing an identifiable standard of community engagement, the classification itself becomes meaningless. This then reflects on the institution conducting the vetting process and puts them at risk of a similar judgment. For Carnegie to remain relevant in its classification systems, it needs to consistently show that they are able to effectively categorize the organizations of higher education. If they cannot do this, the actions which would otherwise reify their power will serve to undermine it entirely.

As I near the end of my analysis, I wish to make clear again that the Community Engagement Classification is something I whole-heartedly support. It signifies to me that there are people in positions of power that wish to support efforts made by scholars willing to do work that makes a difference in the everyday life of those both inside and outside of academia. I think it is an important work – one that need not rival discovery research but can complement the efforts of existing scholars throughout the system of higher education. Reflexivity on the process is crucial, however, to understanding how we can improve it and see the change that Driscoll, Frey, Barge, Shockley-Zalabak, and others mentioned here and elsewhere wish to see. The intentional variance in the vetting process seem to be the biggest barrier to a concerted effort that produces real results.

With this lenience at play it's difficult to imagine how a university wouldn't get accepted after working their way through the application process. As mentioned before, within the halls of academia are found some of the brightest bureaucrats in the world, and we have spent our entire careers mastering the skills of ambiguity and self-report.

We direct populations and programs that rival that of a small city (for indeed, the populations of the larger campuses approach that size), and just like within a municipality there are individuals working and justifying the plans of the governing body without necessarily being privy to those plans. Is it such a stretch to think that there are institutions that highlight the efforts of engaged scholars throughout their community in an effort to validate the status quo, but now with a new, fancy title?

Questions of motivation also come into play here: If it is possible for a university to be engaged without the title, what motivation is there to go through the vetting process at all? One can imagine an institution simply ignoring the application altogether – confident that their community already knows. The marginal recognition received conceivably wouldn't justify the effort to gain it. On the flip side, if a university gains societal notoriety merely by the presence of the classification, why should they change their practices to actually become engaged? How discouraging would it be to a researcher wanting to do engaged work at a Community Engagement university who still doesn't receive true validation for the impact that takes place outside of academic journals?

### **Conclusion**

In the last chapter I looked at possible reasons for the adoption of the Carnegie classification system. Chief among those was the legitimacy gained by prestigious organizations by embracing the new structure. For those at the top the Carnegie Foundation provided means for justifying their status, and despite the Foundation's angst over the enactment of the hierarchy they created, they benefited in turn through the

adoption. Similarly, the creation of the Community Engagement Classification provides an apparatus of legitimacy through which universities benefit. Ritti and Silver (1986) point out that institutions are happy to adopt structural innovations that add credibility to their own initiatives and “make conclusions self-evident that otherwise might be difficult or risky to prove” (pg. 41). Educational systems are especially prone to these programs, and “a direct benefit from such schemes is to allow the actual activities presumed to produce these effects to remain uninspected, to be taken for granted” (pg. 41). Because these innovations deal with complex issues it is difficult to hold them accountable and the classification has the potential to serve as a mere reputational cue, rather than a reliable indicator of what they claim to represent.

In the end, the real question is whether or not universities are making substantive changes to their policies and their implementation or merely benefitting from another “ritual classification scheme” (Ritti & Silver, 1986, pg. 41). The next chapter of this dissertation is geared toward that end, analyzing the tenure and promotion documents of all R1 schools, over half of which have received and currently hold the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation. In this way we can begin to peel back the rhetorical layers surrounding the new classification and start the process of analyzing universities’ commitment to outreach.

Because there is pressure on institutions of higher education to be relevant in today’s society it isn’t surprising how many of them have applied for and been successful in receiving the Community Engagement Classification. While personally I’m critical of the process involved and its long-term implications for research I care about, I

think Driscoll and the others who worked on the process at the Carnegie Foundation created something with potential to make an impact on how community outreach and engagement is assessed and rewarded. However, it will require more firm standards, more clear guidelines, and perhaps a better handle on the direction they want to go. They are developing a technology that is becoming the standard for evaluation regarding community engagement, and in that effort need to be aware of how ambiguity can mask immobility. Otherwise they may find their efforts co-opted into empty discourse that simply justifies new rooms in the ivory tower.

## CHAPTER IV

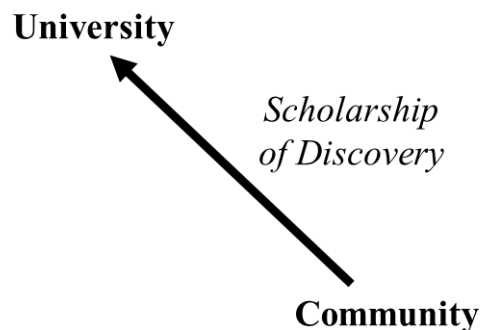
### CONCEPTUALIZING ENGAGEMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES AT R1 UNIVERSITIES

Chapter III raised important questions about the impact of the new Community Engagement Classification and the motives of organizations participating in it. As the first (and only) voluntary classification, it should be a marker for organizational values and identity, but Ritti and Silver (1986) indicate that the reputational benefit of adoption may be an end unto itself. This chapter attempts to clarify that assertion in regard to R1 universities, based on the basic classification of the 2015 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

The selection of R1 campuses and their policies is an attempt to work with the population best suited for this study, since they are the bastions of traditional research, and many have adopted the new classification. The group also includes nearly all of the largest and most prestigious universities in the nation, which set the standard for excellence in higher education. Looking at their tenure and promotion documents can give us a sense of the ongoing conversations around community engagement and engaged scholarship within academia, and indicate whether or not any progress has been made toward those efforts since Driscoll's analysis nearly a decade ago. Tying down how specific institutions view and interact with the external community is difficult at best, but there are some general trends that can be identified.

## Traditional Research

Since World War II, the model of the research within higher education has largely been based on a foundation of knowledge generation, the basic process of which is referred to as traditional research, or what Boyer termed the “scholarship of discovery” (1990; Frey & SunWolf, 2009). While the subject matter is as diverse as the world itself, the process is largely similar across disciplines, and relegates the community to the position of subject. Universities collect data from the external environment and bring it back for analysis and academic discussion, as shown in Figure IV.1. In this model the flow of information and resources (indicated by the arrow) moves from the outer community into the university, and may never be seen again. Much of what is discovered is written up within scholarly journals, the audience of which is primarily located within the universities themselves (Frey, 2009), and knowledge that is discovered through these processes then either remains within the academic sphere or is translated and disseminated to a lay audience.



**Figure IV.1.** Model of Traditional Research

Tenure and promotion guidelines have been shown to have a hand in influencing the prioritization of discovery research within academic activity (Jacobson, Butterill, & Goering, 2004). Universities who identify as doctoral or research-based understandably place a heavy emphasis on the scholarship of discovery and its primary metric: peer-reviewed publication. However, research-focused campuses aren't the only ones concerned with the generation of knowledge; the vast majority of colleges in the United States require some level of this type of scholarship from their faculty, although this manifests itself in different ways. Presumably, tenure is a means of preserving academic freedom, which is to say that by providing tenure to a faculty member the institution is protecting the individual's pursuit of knowledge (Altbach, 2015; Fuchs, 1963). While this practice has been criticized as a way to further insulate academia from outside scrutiny (Bok, 1990; 2009), it remains the primary way in which faculty are evaluated and rewarded within the system. A professor who receives tenure has demonstrated qualities and skills over a period of time that the university system is willing to support over the long-term, and the granting of tenure is reflective of what types of interactions the institutions values.

### **The Acts of Translation**

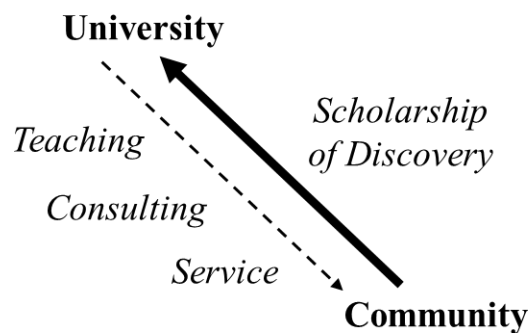
The primary way in which knowledge generated within academia benefits the public is through translation efforts. This can take a variety of forms, and privileges theory over practice in terms of knowing over doing. Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) describe the translation process as “a “trickle down” view of the knowledge supply chain: knowledge is created and tested by academic researchers, taught to students by



instructors, adapted and diffused by consultants, and practiced by practitioners” (pg. 805). In this process the public is assumed to be anxiously awaiting the scraps that fall from the academic table – there is a clear hierarchy of what knowledge is important and who is in possession of it. One of the challenges at research institutions is that translation practices are generally set as low priority for the professoriate – teaching may be a close second at some schools to research and scholarship, but generally consulting and other forms of community engagement fall at the low end (if they are mentioned at all).

Service is nearly always mentioned in relation to the duties of higher education, in conjunction with (although usually valued less than) research and teaching. Definitions of service are varied, depending on how broadly an institution defines the larger community. Indeed, there are some universities that define the community so narrowly that the only service that truly counts is that which services other faculty, such as serving on committees and boards, editing peer-reviewed journals, and directing academic conferences. However, many institutions at least make an effort to be focused outward, as shown in the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification earlier discussed. There is an expectation for universities and professors to take part in the larger community around them, and this is one way in which knowledge gets disseminated to the public at large. The challenge with service to non-academic audiences is that the personal reward for professors who are involved in these activities must be largely intrinsic; generally there is little or no monetary compensation, and tenure and promotion at universities tends to position these activities as supplemental to the other, more “important” contributions of research and teaching (Boyer, 1996).

As a consequence of institutional policies and practices, the patterns of interaction between research universities and their surrounding community tends to look like the model shown in Figure IV.2. Similar to the Model of Traditional Research, the flow of information and resources is still primarily inward toward the university. Outreach and translation efforts are limited; they are peripheral activities shunted to the sides of traditional research. Subsequently, faculty may engage in these activities, but they are not incentivized to do so – especially within the years before tenure is achieved. It is difficult then, for a scholar who is attempting to create their own research pipeline to consider engaged scholarship, and once they have achieved tenure and could (perhaps) pursue more community engagement, their research trajectory is already in motion.



**Figure IV.2.** Model of Translation at Research Universities

In order for campuses to receive the Community Engagement Classification they must presumably demonstrate a number of areas in which they specifically emphasize interaction and partnerships with the public sphere (NERCHE, 2016b). One of the areas

that must be addressed by interested institutions in their application is that of whether tenure and promotion guidelines are designed to reward faculty that engage the community. This is so important, in fact (for reasons mentioned above and more), that fully 10 percent of the 15-page document outlining the requirements for the classification is dedicated specifically to the institutional and departmental constraints that restrict and enable engagement (NERCHE, 2016a), with questions such as the following:

Are there institutional level policies for promotion (and tenure at tenure-granting campuses) that specifically reward faculty scholarly work that uses community-engaged approaches and methods?

Is community engagement rewarded as one form of scholarship?

If current policies do not specifically reward community engagement, is there work in progress to revise promotion and tenure guidelines to reward faculty scholarly work that uses community-engaged approaches and methods? (pgs. 8-10)

Interestingly, the results of the new classification were met with mixed feelings by the designers themselves (Driscoll, 2008; 2009). While they were pleased with the various programs and approaches toward community, the policies regarding tenure and promotion were inconsistent in their treatment of scholarly engagement efforts. As noted before, tenure and promotion structures – even among universities granted the new classification – were specifically identified as an area that could be improved.

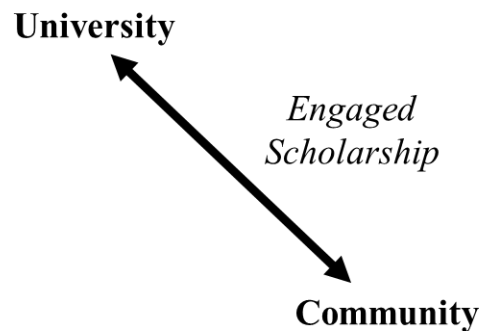
## **Engaged Scholarship**

Over the past few decades there has been a push from scholars worldwide and in many disciplines to begin to combine outreach efforts and research. Confronting the views of both “discovery” research and the unidirectional “service” and “consultation”, engaged scholarship seeks ways to not only work with people in their practice but also generate knowledge that can inform theory on the subject overall. Van de Ven (2007) describes engagement in the following way:

Engagement is a relationship that involves negotiation and collaboration between researchers and practitioners in a learning community; such a community jointly produces knowledge that can both advance the scientific enterprise and enlighten a community of practitioners. Instead of viewing organizations and clients as data collections sites and funding sources, an engaged scholar views them as a learning workplace (idea factory) where practitioners and scholars co-produce knowledge on important questions and issues by testing alternative ideas and different views of a common problem. (pg. 7)

At the heart of engaged scholarship is “a pluralistic view of science and practice as representing distinct kinds of knowledge that can provide complementary insights for understanding reality” (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006, pg. 808). Where simple service or consulting may privilege academic knowledge and actually perpetuate that epistemic hierarchy, the scholarship of engagement recognizes the advantages of a more collaborative approach. Thus, the model of engaged scholarship is one of reciprocity between the external community and that of academia, to the enriching of both (see

Figure IV.3). Although the process can take longer, it not only brings the knowledge of the university to the community, but also generates opportunities to study subjects that concern current issues, keeping the university relevant in its pursuit of knowledge (Simpson & Seibold, 2008). The question of relevancy is one that has become more prevalent since just before the close of the last century, and can only be answered as universities engage better with their external community and its needs (Boyer, 1996).



**Figure IV.3.** Model of Engaged Scholarship

As one would imagine, the approaches to engaged scholarship are varied, and the impact of each depends on their intent. Putnam and Dempsey (2015) outline five different faces to research that scholars employ, each reflecting the emphasis of working with practitioners on relevant problems in a process of knowledge co-creation (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Simpson & Seibold, 2008). The first of Putnam and Dempsey's faces is that of *applied communication research*. The goal here is that of basic knowledge translation and the process is to take academic research and theory and

distribute it to the general public. This is a reflection of Boyer's basic Scholarship of Application (1990), and others have commented on the benefits of these translational practices as a step away from academic isolationism (Frey, 2009; Hartnett, 2010).

Demonstrating impact and assessing the quality of translation efforts is a challenge as they are primarily focused on taking research to practice, with little (or no) theoretical development.

The next face is called *collaborative learning*, and expands on the unidirectional approach of the first. In these endeavors there is an emphasis on the co-generation of knowledge between scholar and practitioner. This face of engaged scholarship is most completely embodies the recognition of dual knowledge sources and seeks to capitalize on bringing them both together. There are specific efforts made within this approach to remove any power distance between the two areas, providing a level playing field where multiple parties can find a voice. This is especially true when implemented on complex issues, in which participants can be solicited from corporations, government agencies, educational structures, and community members as well. Many interventive practices place an emphasis on this approach, as it can lead to a greater ownership on the part of participants and practitioners when true engagement is achieved (e.g. Appreciative Inquiry – Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Action Research – Stringer, 2013). It also can lead to more creative approaches to knowledge generation, as practitioners and academics view problems from different angles (Deetz, 2008). There are some limitations to this approach, however, including the time involvements for both scholars and practitioners, and finding a common language can be difficult and frustrating

(Barge, Simpson, & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Putnam & Dempsey, 2015).

Putnam and Dempsey's third face is that of *activism and social justice*. While this isn't necessarily unrelated to the other approaches, there is a much greater emphasis of a few key issues. Engaged scholars performing this type of research are concerned with systems of power that leave some groups without access to important resources. Thus, a critical approach is inherent to these types of projects. Efforts are made within them to empower the groups involved, with an emphasis on grass-roots organizing and training. Ideally, a researcher involved in these programs desires to organize new systems and structures that can be sustained with or without the continued involvement of the scholars themselves. These projects tend to reflect the tenets of feminist research and/or that of critical race theories, working to overcome current issues faced by minority groups (Putnam & Dempsey, 2015). For this face to be counted as engaged scholarship it must be closely tied to one of the others in order to be more than simple activist efforts; scholarship must be evidenced in peer-reviewed publications and/or theory application/development.

*Practical theory* is the fourth face listed. The emphasis here is the use of theory both to improve practice and reflect the learnings of practice-based research back on the theory itself. It is distinct from the first face in that the goal is to improve both theory and research (rather than simply translate existing knowledge), and it differs from the second because while it is concerned with the practical challenges it may not be collaborative with practitioners in its approach and execution. Barge and Craig (2009) give a listing of the three purposes of practical theory, which are mapping, reflexive

research, and transformative action, each of which are repeated in Putnam and Dempsey's article as well. In the first, communicative practices are analyzed and mapped to see how they are currently impacting some practice. This mapping would be a reflection of some theoretical framework and recognizes the spaces where communication theory could be informative in understanding the practice itself. In the second part, the researcher reflects on how the observed practice might enhance and refine the theories mentioned – how does the implementation inform the theory and perhaps alter our understanding? Finally, there is some transformative action that is taken, ideally to improve both the practice and the theories in question. Examples of this include grounded practical theory (Craig & Tracy, 1995), and design theory (Aakhus, 2007). This face is also closely tied to Boyer's (1996) scholarship of engagement, where current issues in practice serve as the impetus for research, aiming to improve knowledge and theory as well as practice.

The fifth and final face that Putnam and Dempsey mention is that of *public scholarship*. They place it last because it is unique from the others in that it utilizes the institution of higher education in order to engage the surrounding community. In this approach the classroom is used as a workshop for analyzing and working on current issues within the real world, and includes programs such as service learning (Frey, 2009, Kahl, 2010) and engaged curriculum development (i.e. including voices in the community in designing courses taught and special topics – Putnam & Dempsey, 2015). Here we have a blend of Boyer's (1990) Scholarships of Application, Integration, and Teaching, as academics utilize their networks within and without the campus to involve



students in active implementation of classroom theories and discussion (Bartunek, 2007). The limitations of this are that as semesters roll over it becomes increasingly difficult to work on long-term issues – students turn over and programs have to bow to curriculum demands. Without strong, long-term relationships formed and maintained between dedicated practitioners and academics, the impacts of this approach are diminished and can be frustrating for both parties.

The time invested in any of the faces of engaged scholarship is substantial, requiring long term relationships of trust and a commitment to implement processes of creation and feedback with the community. These efforts are particularly difficult when the engagement occurs on a personal level, such as faculty research (as opposed to larger-scale campus extension programs). The effort that is required for an individual or small team to create and maintain strong relationships with external parties, developing projects and feedback programs, as well as seeing them all through completion, is a daunting task, especially when compounded by the time constraints of promotion and tenure tracks.

How engaged scholarship is represented and recognized within tenure and promotion policies can be informative on how universities are dealing with this rising approach to both research and community engagement. The various faces discussed by Putnam and Dempsey (2015) each reflect differing priorities and levels of collaboration, and the opportunities to participate in the various activities are partially dependent on the way in which engaged scholarship is modeled (or ignored) within the official documents. Tapping into the structures that are a part of these prominent institutions can aid in

identifying ways in which they can be adjusted to accommodate more varied approaches toward interacting with the larger community.

Because of the voluntary nature of the new classification, as well as the extensive application process, it would be reasonable to assume that those institutions with the most developed structures for community engagement are among those that have received the new Carnegie classification. However, if it appears that there isn't a marked difference in policies between community-engaged campuses and others, then it may point to issues with the classification itself. Further, if there are institutions that are awarding engaged scholarship but haven't yet received the classification, it begs the questions as to why that is. The first step is identification, however – we need to know what is actually in the tenure and promotion documents before further analyses can be performed. In order to address that need, I propose the following questions:

RQ1: Do R1 campuses include faculty interactions with the public community in their incentive systems?

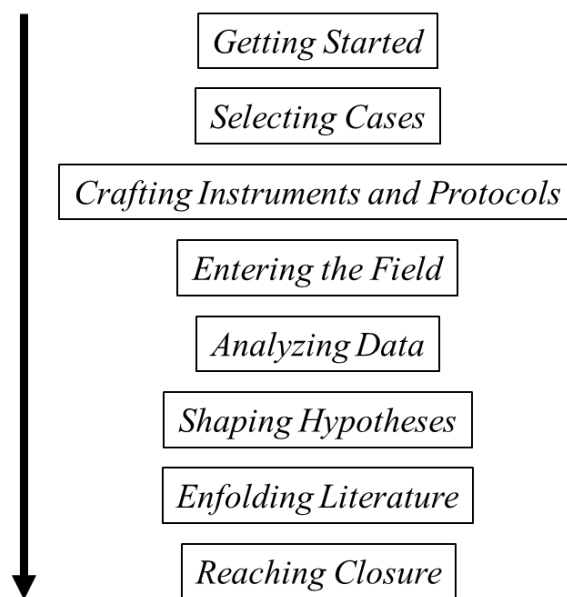
RQ2: How do those R1 universities which do include engaged scholarship within tenure and promotion guidelines conceptualize it?

RQ3: Are the promotion and tenure criteria of universities with the Community Engagement Classification different than those without it?

### **Methodology**

The methodological approach for this chapter is based on Eisenhardt's (1989) model of theory building from case studies. This inductive method is best suited for use when "little is known about a phenomenon" (Eisenhardt, 1989, pg. 548), such as the

emergence of the new Carnegie Classification and its wide adoption primarily within doctoral universities, which traditionally focus their efforts on discovery research. It is an iterative process of data collection and analysis, followed closely by hypothesis generation and testing. The emergent patterns discovered within the cases studied serve to refine the analysis process, leading to logics that can be compared with the current literature on the subject and refined into theory. Eisenhardt's process is outlined in Figure IV.4:



**Figure IV.4.** Eisenhardt's (1989) Process of Building Theory from Case Study Research

As demonstrated in the figure, the process generally proceeds from the beginning through the end, but the inductive nature of the approach may lead a researcher to return

to the field or the data in order to glean more information that previously wasn't noted. This could happen due to the generation of a new hypothesis from the data analysis or from a comparison with existing literature on the subject. Revisiting the cases aids not only in refining the emergent theory, but also tests for the validity and accuracy of both the process itself and the measures implemented, an important aspect of case study research (Yin, 2013). For this study it was crucial that the analysis be consistent across each of the documents, requiring multiple iterations to ensure that each document and its contents was given equal treatment.

### *Case Selection*

The subject matter of this study is the engaged scholarship statements within the tenure and promotion guidelines of every doctoral university designated by Carnegie as having a very high research focus (R1, n=115). Eisenhardt (1989) notes that in this method an intentional, theoretical sampling of cases is the best approach, rather than random sampling. With this in mind, the purpose behind selecting R1 universities is threefold:

1. Of all the basic classifications, it is arguable that this group contains the highest concentration of the most prestigious and visible campuses in the nation. They also control the largest budgets and have the ability to support different research initiatives. In addition, universities in other tend to emulate R1 universities (McCormick & Zhao, 2005), so the way in which R1s treat engaged scholarship can potentially have the greatest impact on whether or not it becomes a more viable option across the nation.

2. The arguments for engaged scholarship are founded on the premise that research continues to be a valuable (if not necessary) activity. Indeed, the call for more recognition and processes that enable the approach reflects a belief that research is important in scholarship generally. Therefore, it is in R1 institutions where this conflict is most prominent – as dedicated researchers make strides to work within and alongside the external community.
3. As of the most recent iteration of the Carnegie Classifications, over half of R1 universities have received the Community Engagement qualification (n=61; 53%). This is a higher portion than any other classification, and – as noted previously – makes the motivation for applying an enigma, especially considering the emphasis on discovery research.

### *Crafting Instruments and Protocols*

The first step in this phase was to obtain the documents themselves and immerse myself in each individual case. Most were in the public domain and could be found on the websites of the various schools, located within specific policies for tenure and promotion, or included in larger documents, such as faculty handbooks. Where general policies could not be obtained, the highest sublevel available was used, prioritizing multi-college and college-level policies over those designed for specific departments (n=11). There were five institutions that were completely inaccessible – their documents were password protected or otherwise not made public, reducing the number of possible cases in the analysis to 110. Of the five missing, three were land grant schools with the Community Engagement distinction, one was public but not land grant, and one was a

private institution.

Each policy was then taken and searched by term either on their website or in the provided documents. Google Chrome was used as the internet browser for any online content, and the Adobe Acrobat Reader was used for reviewing the .pdf documents. The list of terms was developed during a pilot study looking at samples of tenure and promotion documents from both Masters and Doctorate level universities (Shipley, 2016). In that study, the key distinctions fell among their usage of “community”, “engagement”, and “scholarship” with the policies themselves. Thus, to begin this paper a thorough search of each of the universities’ documents for any and all references to those terms was made, as well as variations on and synonyms of each of these words (i.e. “public”, “applied”, “engaged”, “research”, etc.). All references found were documented and the sections were analyzed to find both how the campus envisioned their role within a larger community (or not) and how engaged scholarship was conceptualized and assessed (if at all). Putnam and Dempsey’s (2015) five faces were used as the primary categories under which each statement was classified.

The various faces of engaged scholarship can be framed in different ways, and the relative importance of each (to the organization) is reflected in its positioning within these categories. As noted earlier, service tends to receive the least amount of attention in the tenure and promotion process. Subsequently, notes were taken regarding the relative placement of references to engagement and the community.

### *Entering the Field and Data Analysis*

Eisenhardt (1989) points out that “A striking feature of research to build theory

from case studies is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection” (538). This approach allows a researcher to be flexible in his or her approach and adjust as necessary, being careful not to sacrifice systematic analysis in the process. As a single investigator on this project it was crucial that I be mindful of and reflexive in how the data was approached. In each individual document – what Eisenhardt (1989) calls “within-case data” – it was important to do all I could to ensure that no *a priori* conclusions would distract from the raw data. While anonymity simply wasn’t possible, the institutions were not identified as being Community Engagement campuses or not. In fact, aside from their names, all other classifications and distinctions were also suppressed (unless specifically mentioned within the text) prior to and throughout the primary analysis of their tenure and promotion documents.

Once the individual cases had been analyzed, I could begin a “cross-case search for patterns” (Eisenhardt, 1989, pg. 540), where cases are compared for similarities and differences. Eisenhardt notes that the process of systematically comparing case studies helps to avoid “premature and even false conclusions as a result of... information-processing biases” (pg. 540). Subsequently, the universities were divided at random into ten groups of eleven and twelve institutions each in order to check for consistency. Each group was analyzed individually for themes which were then compared to the larger body to find similarities and differences. In this way, the analysis could be broken up into smaller sections and checked for accuracy and validity. Finally, the ten groups were taken together as a whole and the preliminary analysis was completed using the themes from every institution in the classification. Clusters of similar organizations were noted

by the similar way in which they framed community, research, and engaged scholarship. The goal of this step is to identify “tentative themes, concepts, and possibly even relationships between variables” (Eisenhardt, 1989, pg. 541) that can be used to shape hypotheses, leading to theory generation.

Once this process was finished the different policies and practices were organized and compared using the Community Engagement Classification. Anomalies – schools without the classification that included statements regarding community engagement and those with the classification that had no policies in place to reward outreach – were of particular interest here. General trends were also identified, but the key test of this analysis was to discover if there were general differences within those receiving the classification from those without the distinction.

### *Shaping Research Questions*

Eisenhardt’s (1989) model accounts for the difficulty of inductive theory generation. She notes that “sometimes a relationship is confirmed by the case evidence, while other times it is revised, disconfirmed, or thrown out” (542). When the Community Engagement variable was thrown in, it quickly became apparent that there was more to the way in which engaged scholarship was discussed than the Carnegie classification could account for. There were inconsistencies within the group – including complete omissions of the external community at all – and also among those without the distinction, such as clear policies on engaged scholarship and incentives for outreach and extension efforts. Deeper analysis was needed as to the purposes of each campus and how they perceived their specific mission in connection to the external community. Two



more research questions were added to the three initially identified for the study:

Emergent RQ1: Is institutional mission related to a university's adoption of the Community Engagement Classification?

Emergent RQ2: Is there a relationship between when universities adopted the Community Engagement Classification and how they conceptualize engagement in their tenure and promotion documents?

Universities were coded as land grant, public (but not land grant), or private institutions, and the terms "extension" and "outreach" were added to the analysis. These were noted along with research, teaching, and service, and specific attention was given as to whether they were given entire sections and criteria or whether they were couched under one of the other three activities. Statements of engaged scholarship that were included in outreach and extension were also reclassified depending on how the larger category was prioritized with research and teaching. Some universities were clear that extension was to be evaluated on equal footing with teaching or research whereas others listed it as supplementary to those other activities, similar to service. Still others nested it within research, teaching, or service, indicating the priority it should be given by association.

Adoption was also analyzed in this phase, because – as a voluntary classification – receiving the distinction required a university to actively seek out and apply. Adoption was overlaid with the land grant, public (but not land grant), and private identities, to see if there were patterns that reflected organizational mission. As a part of this phase it was necessary to do an extensive study of how the classification developed and shifted since

its first iteration in 2006. For this I had to pull the Community Engagement Classification for each year (2006, 2008, 2010, and 2015), and compare each report and check to see which years each institution obtained the distinction. The 2015 report had the years listed for any that currently hold the classification, but there were also R1 universities that dropped off over the years or didn't certify in 2010 only to recertify in 2015. Once it was clear which universities had received the distinction and when they had received it, a comparison could be made across the various groups.

The final stage of the iterative process for this study was a closer analysis of adoption coupled with the specific statements on engaged scholarship within the tenure and promotion documents. Rather than a big picture study of university mission and purpose, this was a closer look at whether the adoption year was an indicator as to whether or not tenure and promotion documents included statements on the scholarship of engagement. The diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2010) occurs most regularly in an S-curve – adoption begins slowly with just a few and then increases rapidly as the early and late majorities adopt, and then slowing down until near ubiquity (if not complete adoption). We would expect to see similar results with the new classification, as R1 universities embrace the voluntary distinction over time. Comparing statements on engaged scholarship with adoption groups might give us an idea of the general motivations of the various universities, including how committed they are to community engagement.

## Results

### *RQ1: Do R1 Campuses Include Faculty Interactions with the Public Community in Their Incentive Systems?*

The primary interest here was to see how the various institutions situated themselves as a part of a larger community (if at all). The pilot study mentioned earlier (Shipley, 2016) showed that 20% of R1 universities in the study defined their tenure and promotion processes in ways that excluded interaction and activities outside the university. Community was defined narrowly, as the ‘University community’ as opposed to the public or external society. In short, all forms of engaged scholarship or community outreach were ignored.

Of the 110 documents studied, 20 universities (18.2%) omitted any reference to an external community in their discussion of tenure and promotion criteria (see Table IV.1). At these schools, promotion and tenure criteria do not give faculty any incentive to interact outside of academia. Special attention was given to the policies at these institutions, especially within the service category, as this is the primary area for references to the public in other documents. Instead, these schools defined community in interesting ways. Where no reference to an external community was given, institutions instead provided statements such as:

Service expectations vary depending on department and candidate rank, but a candidate should be evaluated following departmental standards and criteria for service to the department, the University, and the profession. (Brown University)

Candidates are expected to have demonstrated a willingness to contribute to the

greater academic community at the departmental, university or professional levels. (Tufts University)

The principal factors considered are teaching, scholarly or artistic work, and service to the department, school, and University. (University of Rochester)

**Table IV.1.** Framing the External Community

<b>Framing the External Community</b>		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Policies</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Overall	110	
No reference	20	18.2%
Low Priority (only)	58	52.7%
High Priority	32	29.1%
Community Engagement	58	
No reference	8	13.8%
Low Priority (only)	25	43.1%
High Priority	25	43.1%
Land Grant	37	
No reference	2	5.4%
Low Priority (only)	19	51.4%
High Priority	16	43.2%
Public (not Land Grant)	42	
No reference	2	4.8%
Low Priority (only)	28	66.7%
High Priority	12	28.6%
Private	31	
No reference	16	51.6%
Low Priority (only)	11	35.5%
High Priority	4	12.9%

Service remains an outlier in how universities prioritize faculty activity. Tenure and promotion documents, as public records of the values of institutions, are careful in how they frame teaching, however. Interestingly, research and teaching were given equal weight in the language of almost every tenure and promotion document analyzed. In fact, only six universities (5.5% of those analyzed) clearly prioritized research over teaching in their criteria. This is counter-intuitive to the assumption that research is the dominating factor in tenure cases among faculty, and required that in the analysis I rate them both as high priority activities, while service and other professional activities were identified as low priority. Examples of how policies framed and compared teaching and research and diminished service are included here:

Academic achievement, the chief criterion for promotion, is comprised of excellence in the areas of teaching, research and publications. (Boston College)

Teaching/instruction and research/scholarship/creative activity shall be primary in this evaluation. University service, service to the profession/discipline, and discipline-based community service shall be secondary. (Temple University)

In a research university, which has as its main functions the advancement and imparting of knowledge, teaching and scholarship may be said to have equal rank and be interdependent. (University of Pennsylvania)

The award of tenure will be made primarily on the basis of scholarship, research and/or creative activity, and teaching. Professional activity, including service to the university, will also be taken into account. (Brandeis University)

Not only did universities frequently talk about them in tandem, many listed and

described teaching first among faculty responsibilities and tenure criteria, followed by research and then service. These framing mechanisms made it difficult to distinguish research and teaching on a general level, so they are both treated as high priority activities in this analysis.

Universities' official missions are clearly related to how they frame their interactions with the community. Land grant universities, for instance, are the most likely to mention community outreach within the high priority activities of research and teaching, whereas private schools are the most likely to not mention it at all. Exceptions to this are notable; while the vast majority of campuses without an external reference are privately funded (16 of the 20), there are four universities that are publicly funded that also make a statement in their tenure and promotion documents that community outreach is not a necessary function of scholarship. In addition, eight Community Engagement schools (one land grant, one public, six private) don't have any reference to the external community at all. However, this is only one small piece of what is a much more complex issue.

For the rest of the schools, the vast majority of statements regarding the external community was found under service activities (or their equivalent), included in 74 of the documents (67.3% of all policies). Of course, many of these policies also included other statements that referred to the non-academic community, but these had to do with some face of engaged scholarship, and are included in that analysis. For institutions that only mentioned community within low-priority activities (some 58 institutions – 52.7% of the total), the general Model of Research Universities seems to apply: while some

translation efforts are considered, the vast majority of their actions are based around the accumulation of academic knowledge. All told, most schools were content to relegate interaction with the community to the positions of lowest importance – mentioning it within service (if at all). If tenure and promotion guidelines are any indication of the attitude an organization has toward community outreach, a faculty member at these institutions would find their efforts for engagement to be limited, if not explicitly discouraged.

*RQ2: How Do Those R1 Universities Which Do Include Engaged Scholarship Within Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Conceptualize It?*

Within the R1 tenure and promotion documents in this study, 45 of the 110 policies analyzed (40.1%) included statements that could be classified as having to do with one or more of Putnam and Dempsey's (2015) five faces of engaged scholarship. While many of policies included brief references limited to one face or another (n=22), the rest (n=23) were more complex and could be categorized in multiple groups, totaling in 79 unique statements that were classified under the different areas. The distribution of these statements is shown in Table IV.2:

**Table IV.2.** Distribution of Statements on Engaged Scholarship

<b>Distribution of Statements on Engaged Scholarship</b>		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Applied Communication Research	22	48.9%
Applied Communication Research (only)	9	20.0%
Collaborative Research	12	26.7%
Collaborative Research (only)	0	0.0%
Activism and Social Justice	1	2.2%
Activism and Social Justice (only)	0	0.0%
Practical Theory	24	53.3%
Practical Theory (only)	9	20.0%
Public Scholarship	20	44.4%
Public Scholarship (only)	4	8.9%
Two Faces	16	35.6%
Three Faces	3	6.7%
Four Faces	4	8.9%

The first face of engaged scholarship – *applied communication research* – was a common theme, and was included in 22 of the 45 policies (48.9%; 20% of all R1 documents in this study). That it is used often is not surprising, since this face is less disruptive of standard promotion and tenure criteria, hierarchies, and systems:

Research and creative activities encompass all scholarly work, including the scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and instruction. (Arizona State University)

Other products of scholarship as broadly defined, including the scholarship of discovery, education, application or integration in which the candidate is a lead investigator. (University of Colorado)

Other statements categorized under *applied communication research* were



identified by their use of the term application by their discussion of the translation of knowledge – taking research and using it to improve external practices:

At times, activities in this area may involve the application of a faculty member's professional expertise to the solution of problems beyond the academic world.

(University of Louisville)

Collaborative scholarly efforts, cross-disciplinary activities, and the integration of scholarship into the creation, application, and dissemination of knowledge are also recognized as relevant dimensions of faculty performance. (Michigan State University)

Only twelve tenure and promotion documents (26.7% of the policies that included engaged scholarship; 10.9% of the total group) included statements that were coded as *collaborative learning*. Each of these statements was accompanied by at least one other face of engaged scholarship, such as applied communication research or practical theory. On a spectrum of research, from discovery to fully engaged scholarship, collaborative learning falls at the far end, with the other faces closer to the middle, so if a university is committed to collaborative learning they are likely to also value other efforts. Even so, some universities were very clear in their requirements:

Scholarship in the Engagement context is a reciprocal partnership with the community, involving mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge the creation, delivery and assessment of timely, unbiased, educational materials and programs that address relevant, critical and emerging issues. (University of Oregon)

Publicly engaged scholarship may involve partnerships of University knowledge

and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, creative activity, and public knowledge... (Syracuse University)

Community-engaged research is a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner at all stages of the research process. (Virginia Commonwealth University)

Others were less explicit, simply contenting themselves with mentioning engaged scholarship as an available option for consideration in the tenure and promotion process:

Scholarship includes original contributions to relevant disciplines, and may include newer forms such as engaged scholarship, public scholarship, entrepreneurial projects, and interdisciplinary research, regardless of the medium of publication or execution. (West Virginia University)

It is noted that in some areas of scholarship, publications or other products may appear only after lengthy or extensive effort and may appear in a wider range of venues, both of which can be particularly true of community-engaged and/or interdisciplinary work at the local, national and/or international levels.

(University of South Florida)

The nature of dual sources of knowledge (both theoretical and practical) and a commitment to full collaboration lends itself to an acceptance of other forms that are (perhaps) less involved. As such, this face was never found in a policy that didn't also include some other type of engagement. Chiefly, *collaborative learning* was used in conjunction with practical theory, which is a natural connection, as they both originate around generating theoretical knowledge out of relevant practical issues.

Putnam and Dempsey's (2015) third face, that of *activism and social justice*, was only specifically mentioned once in any of the tenure and promotion documents studied. While many faculty members may participate in these activities, they are not given explicit space within the reward system. As such, Syracuse University – a private university that was Community Engagement classified in 2006 but no longer carries the distinction – alone contained a statement that could clearly be assigned here:

Publicly engaged scholarship may involve partnerships of University knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, creative activity, and public knowledge; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address and help solve critical social problems; and contribute to the public good.

*Practical theory* was the most common face within tenure and promotion documents, located in 24 of the 45 policies (53.3%; 21.8% of all studied). General scholarly engagement reflecting a responsiveness to practical problems was mentioned, distinct from *applied communication research* in that it originates from practice and focuses on theory creation:

Creative contributions through independent effort, or through professional organizations, to the advancement of theory and practice in a field must also be evaluated. (University at Buffalo)

Faculty members who are in positions that are primarily public engagement-oriented should be evaluated with heavy weight on the quality of performance in

the activities provided. Activities should share the following three distinguishing characteristics:

1. They contribute to the public welfare or the common good.
2. They call upon the faculty member's academic or professional expertise
3. They directly address or respond to societal problems, issues, interests or concerns. (University of Minnesota)

Finally, twenty campuses had comments reflecting Putnam and Dempsey's (2015) *public scholarship* face (44.4% of the policies of universities that were included in the engaged scholarship designation; 18.2% of the total group). As outlined earlier, this face is primarily concerned with curricular development and teaching in ways that impact the community. In this way it differs from the other faces, as they are focused on the development of theory and practice, and have little to do with the activity of teaching in the classroom. Service learning was mentioned in a few of these documents, but the vast majority reflected an emphasis on public outreach and extension services:

Outreach/engagement activities such as service learning, conducting workshops, seminars, and consultations, and the preparation of educational materials for those purposes, may be integrated into teaching efforts. (Colorado State University)

Demonstrated quality of teaching may include community-engaged teaching that connects students and faculty members with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students'

academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses or service-learning clinical practica. (Virginia Commonwealth University)

Faculty members may engage in extension/professional practice activities by utilizing their professional expertise to disseminate information outside of the traditional classroom to help improve the knowledge and skills of their clientele (i.e., the publics they serve) or the environment in which they live and work.

(Iowa State University)

In addition to the 45 with clear statements on community engagement, there were five more institutions whose policies were too vague to be categorized. Indeed, it is doubtful that they are referring to engaged scholarship at all in their statements, but it isn't clear that they are specifically ignoring these efforts either. As such, they were noted but not included in the statistics and table above.

Of all of the statements classified in this analysis, it was surprising to find that nearly all were made in conjunction with research and scholarship or explicitly prioritized at equal value to traditional research efforts. Four of the 45 documents (8.9% of those containing statements) limited engagement to teaching, and again, the University of California system had an impact, as their statement was located under Professional Activities (listed after research and teaching, but before service). Otherwise, most universities desiring to reward engagement activities demonstrated at least a minimum level of understanding about engaged scholarship that moved beyond service. After eliminating one more document that only mentioned community outreach within the requirements for promotion to full professor, fully 32 of the 45 documents (71.1%;

29.1% of all R1 documents in this study) situated engaged scholarship and its various forms within the highest priority activities of the professoriate.

Generally, the amount of tenure and promotion documents that included statements on engaged scholarship, especially the 32 institutions who had it and framed it as high priority stand as a testament to how universities are shifting. Judging by the statements from the Carnegie Foundation and those of engaged scholars, it would seem that these policies are non-existent, which means that either things have changed (read – improved), the implementation still lags behind the policies themselves, or their experience has been biased toward schools that don’t value engagement. This isn’t to say that there is some work to be done, however. Only 12 schools were bold enough to include statements that dealt with the co-creation of knowledge; the vast majority continue to talk about academic knowledge as a precedent to and more valuable than the knowledge of practice, if – indeed – they recognize it at all. The same issues seen in framing community affect engagement to an even greater extent, for why would you try to engage an external audience at all if they only exist to be studied or (maybe) served?

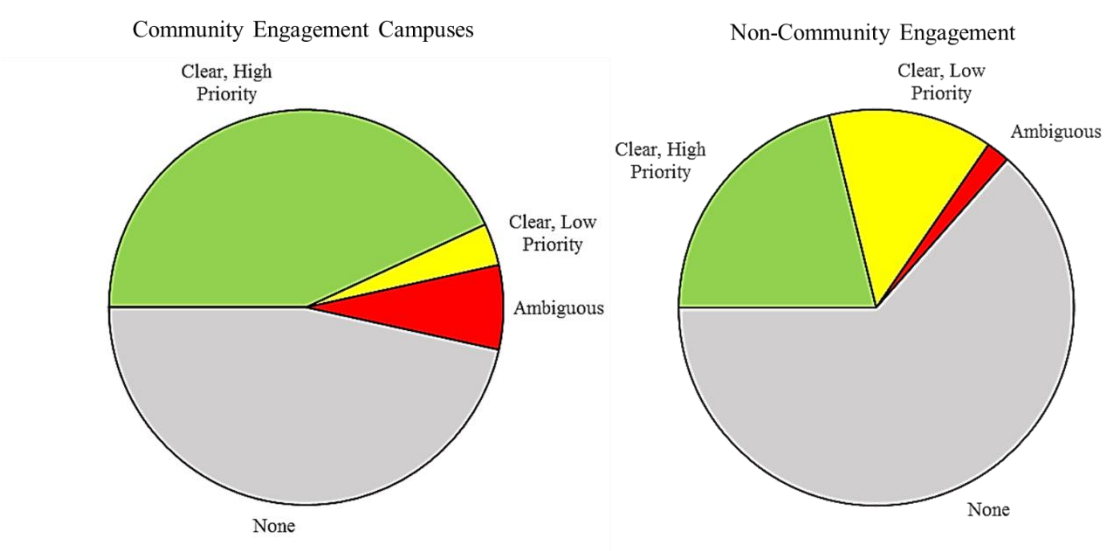
*RQ3: Are the Promotion and Tenure Criteria of Universities with the Community*

*Engagement Classification Different than Those Without It?*

Out of the 110 R1 tenure and promotion documents, 58 (52.7%) came from institutions currently carrying the classification. Of those, nearly half (n=27, 46.6% of Community Engagement campuses) had no reference at all to the scholarship of engagement of any sort, and – as mentioned previously – eight of those didn’t have a single reference to the external community in their policies at all. In addition, four of the

five of the ambiguous statements that could not be categorized came from this group. All told, only 27 of the 58 (46.6%) Community Engagement campuses had a clear reference to any of the faces of engaged scholarship.

Despite the low numbers overall, most of the statements about engaged scholarship that came from Community Engagement institutions placed engagement as a high priority: only five of the 27 statements were not included within research activities (or equivalent), and only two (both University of California campuses) placed their statements below teaching. To give a comparison, of the 52 non-Community Engagement schools, 18 (34.6%) had clear statements on engaged scholarship, but only 11 (21.2%) placed them within research or teaching, and 33 (63.5%) had no references at all. Figure IV.5 shows the distribution of statements on engaged scholarship and the priority they were given based on their placement within research and teaching, or otherwise:



**Figure IV.5.** Comparing Engaged Scholarship Statements: Community Engagement vs. Non-Community Engagement

Overall, the frequency of statements on engaged scholarship is higher within policies written by schools carrying Carnegie's Community Engagement distinction (46.6%, as compared to 34.6% of those without), but the gap separating the two isn't wide. In addition, both groups include a large percentage of universities whose policies do not explicitly support engagement. Almost half of the campuses (46.6%) that have now been identified as engaging the community have structured their tenure and promotion – at least at the university level – in such a way as to discourage faculty participation in that effort. These results also beg the following question: why are there any statements of engaged scholarship outside of the Carnegie classification at all? High priority references are more than twice as likely to come from Community Engagement campuses, but that isn't saying a lot. Both groups include a high percentage of institutions with no references at all, including an equal portion within Community Engagement institutions of those with a clear reference and those with none. Campuses have had four iterations spread over a decade to apply and receive the distinction, and adoption is unusually high within R1 institutions; if the distinction isn't a reliable indicator of schools that are friendly to engaged scholarship, what is?

It seems that the Carnegie classification is less effective as an indicator of community engagement than institutional funding and mission. When statements of engagement are overlaid with the distinctions of land grant, public (non-land-grant), and private, a clear trend emerges (see Table IV.3). Over half of the land grant institutions (n=22, 59.5% of the 37 studied) have clear statements on community engagement, and 17 public universities (40.5% of 42) express those same values. In contrast, only six



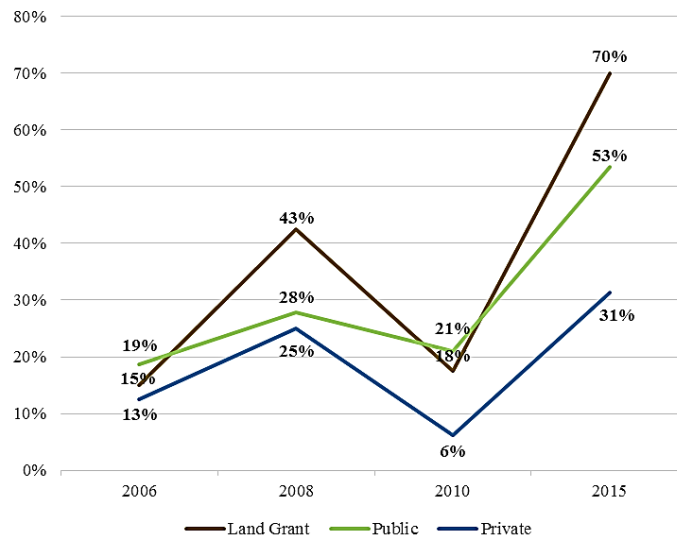
private campuses (19.4% of 31) said anything specific about community engagement. As a point of fact, private schools also accounted for most of the tenure and promotion documents that excluded all references to an external community, tallying 16 total (51.6%), more than half of those studied. This inward focus is surely a barrier to committing to programs that enable and reward engaged scholarship in its various forms.

**Table IV.3.** Frequency of Statements on Engaged Scholarship

<b>Frequency of Statements on Engaged Scholarship</b>			
<i>Category</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Community Engagement	27	58	46.6%
Land Grant	22	37	59.5%
Public (not Land Grant)	17	42	40.5%
Private	6	31	19.4%

*Emergent RQ1: Is Institutional Mission Related to a University's Adoption of the Community Engagement Classification?*

Adoption wasn't consistent within research schools. Compared to other institutional groups, R1 schools were extremely quick to adopt the new classification, but there are some clear differences within the group itself. For the analysis of tenure and promotion documents I divided the R1 universities based on funding and mission, creating three distinct groups: land grant institutions (n=40), public universities without the land grant distinction (n=43), and private campuses (n=32). . See Figure IV.6 for a graph of how Community Engagement was diffused in each group:



**Figure IV.6.** Adoption Rates Within R1 Universities

Understanding that the year 2010 is odd because of the requirement for each university to reapply to the classification, each diffusion curve generally reflects the expected S-model, but each at dramatically different rates. Within the decade since the inception of the Community Engagement Classification, 70% of land grant institutions have applied and received the distinction. Non-land-grant public universities have adopted to a current rate of 53.5%. Lagging well behind the other two is that of private campuses, where only 31.3% currently hold the distinction. Jensen (1982) notes that when innovation adoption is questionable as to its economic impact (for good or bad), there are differences in diffusion within groups as the process moves forward. An organization may hold off for a while, waiting to see if others have benefitted from adopting, in this way increasing their knowledge to make a better decision. More reticence means a slower adoption and the diffusion curve is elongated and has the

potential to fail altogether. Land grant universities, which already have outreach and extension programs as a reflection of their mission would theoretically have less questions about the impact of receiving the Community Engagement Classification. It coincides with efforts that they are currently making and their adoption curve is steep. Public universities are not so very different – they are answerable to the state and federal funding opportunities they have, and thus tend to connect with the external community on various levels. It would only help their case to be identified with the voluntary classification.

Private universities are a different story altogether. Without established structures, clear programs and financial incentives already in place, many of these schools would be more hesitant to make the necessary changes to receive the classification. There is much more uncertainty about the impact – both short and long term of doing the necessary requirements to qualify – because their funding isn't controlled by the public and therefore less correlated to pleasing the external community. Many of them don't already have outreach programs in place, causing an even larger barrier to implementation and a higher cost for adopting engagement policies. And it isn't as if we are discussing small, agile organizations, either – doctoral universities are titanic institutions that are very slow in changing what they do and how they do it.

*Emergent RQ2: Is There a Relationship Between When Universities Adopted the Community Engagement Classification and How They Conceptualize Engagement in Their Tenure and Promotion Documents?*

Year of adoption does seem to have an effect on tenure and promotion policies.

Indeed, the further back you go, the more likely to see policies friendly to the scholarship of engagement (see Table IV.4). Of the 18 R1 institutions that adopted in 2006, fully two-thirds (n=12) contained clear statements on engaged practice. That percentage gradually diminishes within policies of organizations who received the distinction in 2008, dropping to nine of 19 (47.4%). In 2010 the number is only five of 16 (31.3%), and finally in 2015, of the eight documents analyzed only two had clear policies (25%). Ambiguous statements begin to show up in 2010 as well, continuing through the most recent listing, indicating either a reticence to fully adopt engagement or a lack of understanding as to what it is. The numbers of the final year look even more dismal when analyzed in terms of prioritization – only one of the two statements on engaged scholarship is mentioned in relation to research, the other being relegated to professional activities listed after service. The decline of both the frequency and the priority of statements on engaged scholarship is both clear and concerning.

**Table IV.4.** Community Engagement Adoption and Engagement Statements

<b>Community Engagement Adoption and Engagement Statements</b>								
	<u>2006</u>		<u>2008</u>		<u>2010</u>		<u>2015</u>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
New R1 Schools	18		19		16		8	
Clear Statements	12	66.7%	9	47.4%	5	31.3%	2	25.0%
No References	6	33.3%	10	52.6%	9	56.3%	4	50.0%
Ambiguous	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	2	25.0%

## Discussion

Most universities (81.8%) acknowledge the external community and point to some form of interaction with them in their tenure and promotion documents. While some of this is relegated to service and is generally ignored, there are clear provisions at many universities (n=32) for outreach within other, higher priority activities. The majority of campuses that are completely focused inward (75% of those with no references to community) are privately funded – they are not answerable to the public like the other types, and thus are less concerned about including them in what they reward their faculty for doing. Generally, among R1s there is a recognition that they are not completely isolated, although it is clear that most prioritize discovery research and academic knowledge far above collaborations between scholarship and practice.

There are a number of R1 institutions (n=45, 40.1%) that explicitly provide for some form of engaged scholarship in their tenure and promotion documents. These policies reflect different approaches, from applied research to full collaboration to classroom engagement with the community, and – even more surprisingly – the vast majority of them (77.8%) are situated within discussions of research and teaching, rather than service or professional activity. This indicates that some consideration is being given to the impact that these endeavors can have on both theory *and* practice. Of course, this is a very surface-level analysis – each of these documents represents entire sets of policies specific to colleges and departments, and the actual tenure and promotion process within each has the potential to look vastly different. But it's a start. This analysis has demonstrated that some of the ideas that are taking hold and manifesting

themselves in official documents, which theoretically will have a trickle-down effect to influence current practice.

The adoption of the Community Engagement Classification seems to be driven more by university mission than anything else, due to the high rates among public schools (both land grant and otherwise) and the slow adoption among private schools. However, there are some irregularities that would be interesting to explore. One of the primary requirements for the application process is that of reward policies for community engagement, but it seems that the Carnegie Foundation is only doing a mediocre job at identifying those policies at the institutional level. A loose vetting process won't serve to add credibility to the classification overall, and campuses that are unsure about its value will be certain to take note. Even more interesting is that there are still many campuses with missions (twelve land grant institutions, for example – 30%) and/or policies (19 institutions) that are friendly to community engagement and engaged scholarship that don't have the distinction at all. Perhaps they don't see the financial advantage of receiving the title, or perceive that doing so would help their image with significant stakeholders (Jensen, 1982). They may be doing engaged work, and are comfortable doing so without having the certification, or maybe they have applied in the past but had deficiencies in other areas that kept them from receiving the distinction.

Finally, early adopters are more likely to have clear statements on engaged scholarship than the other groups. This could result from a number of different reasons. It could be that universities were already involved in engagement activities, and thus didn't have to make as many adjustments. In addition, for the initial release, the

Carnegie Foundation targeted schools that they thought would fit within their qualifications for application (Driscoll, 2009), which might have front-loaded the adoption with universities that were more likely to have reward systems in place for engaged scholarship. Institutions applying now may be less aligned with the classification, so they are prioritizing other parts of the application before tenure and promotion guidelines. It might also be that the change process is slow; the Community Engagement Classification may be making an impact on tenure and promotion documents, but only in the long-term. Finally, it could be that the standards have become even more relaxed over the years in terms of tenure and promotion documents. The control over the application process changed hands for the 2015 edition – maybe the New England Resource Center for Higher Education wasn't as strict. Continued growth may have overshadowed their desire to see substantive change in organizational policy. Whatever the reason, the longer a university has had the distinction, the more likely it is to support faculty efforts to engage the community.

As I said, it's a start. In the words of the late Hans Rosling, public speaker and international scholar, "The first thing to think about the future is to know about the present." This study certainly points to many areas that the Carnegie Foundation could focus future efforts. It also presents a case for engaged scholars across the nation on which they can look to and work on, leveraging existing policy into tangible recognition rather than merely pleading for greater understanding. The traditional models of universities and research are certainly the most common, and this paper is less a criticism of that approach than an analysis of a new, creative form, and how it is being

adopted within R1 schools. But this is only a starting point. It may be that when these policies get translated down in practice they are still focused primarily on publications and academic impact. Over time, however, I'm hopeful that more options will be available for faculty, options that many prestigious, R1 universities even now are already including in their policies. So it might be less about pushing education on engaged scholarship; it may be that we simply need to find better ways to draw policy into practice, a task that engaged scholars should be uniquely situated to do.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has had a hand in the development of higher education. The initiatives they have attempted over the years have been met with a mixed reception, but the stories that are used to narrate their past today tell a reputation-enhancing story. Prominent among these accounts is that of the development and release of the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. These narratives form the groundwork from which Carnegie has launched its new voluntary classification, which is given to universities that show an interest in and support for engaging with their communities. The unique optional status of this Community Engagement Classification has required that the Foundation engage in various rhetorical strategies to aid in its adoption within institutions of higher education, a process which has led 361 universities and colleges to apply and receive the distinction within ten years. This dissertation looked not only at the rhetorical practices of the Carnegie foundation itself, both in reputation development and the design of the new classification, but also the adoption of the Community Engagement Classification among R1 universities and the implementation of supporting structures, as evidenced by public tenure and promotion policies.

#### **Key Findings**

In Chapter II, I focused on the public memory and reputational work that the

Carnegie Foundation continues to perform regarding themselves as an organization and the Classifications system overall. I found that their relationship with prestigious research universities is complex, that there is an interdependency between the two that places the Carnegie Foundation both in control of the method through which universities identify themselves but also at the mercy of university support and legitimation of the program as a whole and the methods through which the Carnegie Classification is adopted and implemented. By the Carnegie Foundation's own account, the continued success of this program is largely due to the support they received from research universities, who recognized that they benefited by adopting a system that added to their own legitimacy (McCormick & Zhao, 2005). Despite Carnegie's avowed intentions, the classifications placed research universities at the top of a hierarchy of institutions of higher education. Subsequently, other schools have emulated the actions of the research-intensive group, leveraging the system as a way to augment their own status.

The Community Engagement Classification itself has had an interesting road since being released in 2006. As a voluntary classification, the first and only one of its kind, it has been an experiment, but there are some things about the process that make it even more unique. After a decade, adoption rates among research institutions is higher than among other university groups – and this is especially true of R1 universities. Again, it seems that the Carnegie Foundation is both reliant on and a means of legitimation for research schools; in order to be successful the distinction is dependent on gaining a sufficient level of traction (else it would be irrelevant), and R1s enhance their elite status by being the primary recipients of the new distinction. Currently over

half (n=61, 53%) of all R1s have received the classification, giving their relatively small group the highest adoption rate over the Classification's short history.

In Chapter III I looked at the rhetorical strategies implemented in the design and distribution of the Community Engagement Classification, drawing heavily from the Carnegie Foundation's own accounts of the process. I found that there were three key rhetorical moves: 1) the identification of the terms "community" and "engagement" as ideographs broad enough to embrace a variety of interpretations and forms of implementation, 2) the selection and acceptance of a "wide variety of concrete demands" (Laclau, 2000) included within the application and muddled through in the vetting process, and 3) the acceptance and legitimation of diverse institutional strategies for approaching both community and engagement. I argued that, in an effort to "encompass the broadest conception of interactions between higher education and community and to promote inclusivity" (Driscoll, 2009, pg. 6), thereby maximizing the number of applications and certifications, the Carnegie Foundation defined community engagement so broadly that it loses meaning. Ideographs are useful in garnering widespread support because of their universality, but those benefits are limited by ambiguity. The very nature of ideographs "hinder[s] and perhaps make[s] impossible "pure thought"" (McGee, 1980, pg. 9), meaning that while they are culturally significant they are nearly impossible to define. The Community Engagement Classification as a "technology of deliberation" (Greene, 1998) could prove to be ineffective at identifying what is (and what is not) community engaged – if everything is community engagement then the concept/label is meaningless, becoming merely an "empty signifier" (Laclau, 2000).

In addition the strategic ambiguity of the new classification (the intentional use of ambiguity by the Carnegie Foundation to enable adoption) may, in fact, allow for schools to obtain the distinction without making substantive changes to the ways in which they interact with the community or the incentives they provide their faculties. The current system favors the discovery research model and the metrics of its success (peer reviewed publications), leaving other forms largely neglected and subsequently discouraged. A university might be accepted into the Community Engagement Classification while perpetuating the university-community relationship where knowledge is gleaned from external sources but may never leave the halls of academia once obtained. It falls to the Carnegie Foundation to ensure that the classification becomes a reliable measure of a dedication to outreach and engagement, but they themselves have been doubtful of how effective some of their efforts have been. “Disturbing” inconsistencies (Driscoll, 2009) have plagued the process from the beginning, a factor that will be revisited later in this chapter as we look at legitimization strategies and institutional theory.

In Chapter IV I analyzed the tenure and promotion policies of nearly every R1 university in an attempt to identify how they conceptualized community engagement and the practice of engaged scholarship. I argued that the primary evidence of the strength or weakness in Carnegie’s vetting process is found in tenure and promotion documents, a fact that has been pointed out by the Foundation itself (Driscoll, 2009). One of the reasons why universities struggle to manifest a commitment to the community in tenure and promotion documents is because of a privileging to discovery research that has been

prevalent throughout higher education over the past century (Boyer, 1990). Publications in academic journals and by university presses remain the primary metric for reward systems, and this is most pronounced in R1 schools. In addition, because engaged scholarship is so time-consuming, reward systems that emphasize quantity will discourage individual faculty members from taking on outreach projects. In order to develop the necessary relationships for engaged scholarship and the co-creation of knowledge, other metrics need to be developed that account for the robust nature of engagement.

My first research question was “do R1 campuses’ public promotion and tenure documents include faculty interactions with the public community?” I found that most (81.8%) did include references to activities involving the external community, and 32 (29.1%) frame that interaction within the high priority activities of research and teaching. However, a few (n=20, 18.2%) excluded any reference to an external community. My second research question was how R1s conceptualized engaged scholarship, and I found that over 40% of R1 institutions (n=45) include university policies that account for one or more faces of engaged scholarship, ranging from applied research to knowledge co-creation to teaching in the classroom. Not only are the policies themselves very different in how they approach community engagement, but because it is more difficult to demonstrate public impact than academic impact (which is largely based on citations and journal prestige), there is very little uniformity in the measurement and evaluation of the scholarship of engagement. These results are a first step in analyzing “engaged” universities’ commitment to the concept, but it is only the

first of many. The next step is examining the ways in which the policies are implemented.

The next research question divided the data according to the new Carnegie Classification, asking if promotion and tenure criteria were different between those that had received the distinction and those that had not. I found that there were some differences, but they weren't as pronounced as the rhetoric surrounding the classification suggested that they would be. Whether a campus is a land grant, public (non-land-grant), or private institution is a stronger indicator of how they deal with the community at large and engaged scholarship than the distinction itself. The type of university also had a greater impact on adoption: private R1 universities lag far behind the other schools at a rate of 31.3%, and land grant institutions are the most likely to have sought out and received the distinction, with 70% of their number currently classified as Community Engaged. In contrast, universities that hold the Community Engagement Classification are only marginally more likely to address and reward community outreach than those without the distinction.

Another finding within Chapter IV is that of when R1 universities applied and were awarded the classification: those that adopted in 2006 and 2008 – the first two iterations – are more explicit in their policies about how to recognize and reward engaged scholarship efforts. Those that joined for the first time in the 2010 or 2015 were noticeably less likely to incorporate statements about community outreach and collaborative research in their tenure and promotion documents. The exact causes for the shift in the content of statements on engagement was not clear.

Interestingly, there were a number of universities (n=18, 16.4% of those studied) that were not Community Engagement campuses but still included statements on engaged scholarship within their tenure and promotion documents. They account for outreach and have built in a reward structure to encourage it, but remain apart from Carnegie's distinguished group. While each case is surely unique, at least two explanations could be formulated as to why a university would have policies in their tenure and promotion systems that reward community outreach and engaged scholarship but haven't yet been classified as a Community Engagement by Carnegie:

- 1) Those universities may be satisfied with their efforts, independent of the distinction itself, and/or
- 2) They may not see a benefit to going through the process and/or receiving the classification from the Carnegie Foundation.

These reasons hint at challenges for the Carnegie Foundation and their voluntary classification. If universities that currently include programs that are in line with the values of the new classification are opting to not apply then the Foundation needs to take a close look at themselves and the implementation of the Community Engagement classification. They cannot afford the risks associated with R1 universities not taking them or their classifications seriously if they plan on continuing to be a force in higher education. The more prominent universities signal that they are unconcerned about the value of a Carnegie classification, the more damaging it is overall. Whether it is because the classification is not a good indicator or because the value of Carnegie's distinction is not high enough to incentivize application is not really important long term – both

motivations damage the Foundation's credibility. Irrelevance is a brutal threat for an organization that deals with accreditation, but that is what the Carnegie Foundation may have brought on with their implementation of the new category.

### **Theoretical Implications**

At the core of this dissertation are three key concepts, around which the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification seems to have been established. The first, *engaged scholarship*, seems to be the primary beneficiary of the new focus, as universities attempt to create policies that reward community engagement. It may, however, fall prey to some of the same unintended consequences as well. *Strategic ambiguity* is at the heart of policy creation, but also has been implemented by both the Carnegie Foundation as they advance their new classification and faculty pursuing and promoting engaged scholarship. Each may face the unintended consequences of their rhetorical choices. Finally, *legitimation processes* are at the heart of the interaction between the Carnegie Foundation, universities, and the Community Engagement Classification. While this dissertation is primarily exploratory, the findings do have possible implications in each of these areas.

#### *Engaged Scholarship*

One of the primary concerns of this dissertation is how engaged scholarship is conceptualized, enacted, and rewarded among R1 universities. In light of the unintended consequences of ambiguity that the Carnegie Foundation is facing with their Community Engagement Classification (see Chapter III), it is important to reassess the models of engaged scholarship. Distinct from traditional discovery research, engaged scholarship



seeks to embody “a relationship that involves negotiation and collaboration between researchers and practitioners in a learning community; such a community jointly produces knowledge that can both advance the scientific enterprise and enlighten a community of practitioners” (Van de Ven, 2007, pg. 7).

In Chapter IV I drew from Putnam and Dempsey’s (2015) typology of the five faces of engaged scholarship, and noted how each face was represented (or not) within R1 tenure and promotion documents. There is not the only model to include various forms of engaged scholarship, however. Van de Ven (2007) has a similar model with four different types: 1) informed basic science, or traditional theory development that is considerate of external issues, 2) collaborative research, or the true co-creation of knowledge between scholars and practitioners, 3) evaluation research, which analyzes program or policy design and implementation, and 4) action research, or deliberate intervention aimed at solving a complex, ongoing issue through trial and error.

In both models there is a danger in being too inclusive as scholars attempt to define what counts as engaged scholarship broadly (see my discussion of strategic ambiguity, below). Indeed, it is no wonder that the concept is “easily misunderstood” (Applegate, 2002, pg. 404), as the researchers themselves are not clear as to what counts or does not count as instances of engaged scholarship. If the co-creation of knowledge is truly key, as Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) argue, then at a minimum the first levels mentioned in both Putnam and Dempsey’s (2015) typology – applied communication research – and Van de Ven’s (2007) model – informed basic science are not necessarily exemplars of engaged scholarship as such research is not necessarily collaboratively

generated. Despite claims that “all four forms of engaged scholarship are legitimate and needed” (Van de Ven, 2007, pg. 282), the author himself discounts the first type, admitting that these projects “advance the science more than the practice in a problem domain”, and are “not reflected in research papers published in leading academic journals” (pg. 273). For Putnam and Dempsey’s part, their first face is focused on translation, and is so clearly aligned with Boyer’s own Scholarship of Application (1990) as to beg the question whether we are talking about engaged scholarship or merely community outreach. Boyer (1996) felt the need to differentiate the activities of Application and Engagement, but it seems that contemporary engaged scholars are happy to fold the former into the latter entirely, thus expanding the scope of what counts as engaged scholarship.

This expansion of engaged scholarship to include activities that are not concerned with knowledge creation is risky, however, as the metrics for tenure and promotion remain fixed around publication. This addition may broaden both the appeal of engaged scholarship and its implementation, but the core focus of including practitioners in the generation of knowledge is muddled in an effort to be more inclusive. Thus we see the similarities between Carnegie and their new classification and the engaged scholarship movement: each faces issues of legitimacy (and credibility) and at the same time are attempting to broaden the base of adopters by expanding what can be included in “community engagement” or the scholarship of engagement, respectively. The two efforts may actually be mutually exclusive, as the rhetorical strategies for widespread adoption are directly in competition with those whose purpose is to validate

and define specific, directed action.

Putnam and Dempsey (2015) also run this risk in their face of activism and social justice, efforts that are close to the heart of many scholars who engaged in community outreach. This particular aspect of engaged scholarship has been questioned extensively, not only by external critics (see Applegate, 2002), but also by those seeking to perform the work itself (Frey & SunWolf, 2009; Gunn & Lucaites, 2010). A scholar can easily become so caught up in their personal crusade that they can sacrifice academic rigor for emotional investment. This temptation is especially strong when agreed-upon evaluative criteria for a particular form of research has yet to be developed (see Barge, in press). It also has the potential to politicize research, opening up this form of engaged scholarship to the same critiques aimed at “tainted” efforts to aid businesses (see Behrens & Gray, 2001; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). As noted in Chapter IV, universities are extremely hesitant to include this type of work in anything other than service (Syracuse University excluded), not recognizing it as a form of scholarship at all.

Putnam and Dempsey (2015) assert that “this face (of activism and social justice) is characterized by the direct involvement of community members in research and knowledge production” (pg. 15), but here we see another potential issue with how we talk about engaged scholarship: many scholars are convinced that their problems of legitimacy will be resolved if engaged scholars can simply publish quality articles in leading journals. On the one hand, this makes perfect sense, since that is the way in which academics in the current system prove the worth of their ideas. On the other hand, however, there are no clear metrics for showing the public impact of engaged work,

which leaves engaged scholars asking their programs and institutions to accept their lower quantities of publications (due to the time investments required by truly engaged work) largely on the promise that the work has sufficiently effected people outside the university (Barge, in press). Subsequently, having not been provided any other means to determine the unique value of the co-creation of knowledge, universities themselves are wary of the scholarship of engagement and continue to rely on the primary metric they use to measure discovery research.

We need to rethink the model of engaged scholarship overall. Insofar as engaged scholars become more inclusive to activities that are less focused on knowledge co-creation and might be simply termed as community outreach (including simple translation efforts), they become less able to define and defend the value of what they do. Their numbers might swell, but at what cost to the movement overall? Similarly, if the defense of engaged scholarship is completely reliant on the current system of peer-reviewed publication, it will continue to be a poor one at best, as few fully engaged academics can hope to produce the numbers of journal articles necessary to satiate a critical R1 standard. Scholars who perform this type of work need to identify and hone in on a few critical metrics of external impact that can be used by universities widely to assess engagement efforts. These measures need not be all-encompassing of every possible effort; indeed, if scholars desire to legitimize their research through them, they cannot – and should not – be so broad.

### *Strategic Ambiguity*

This dissertation highlights how strategic ambiguity characterizes the

implementation by the Carnegie Foundation to encourage the adoption of the Community Engagement Classification. Eisenberg (1984) points out two key factors that characterize strategic ambiguity: 1) it is achieved through communication that “[omits] purposefully contextual cues”, and 2) it is used by individuals “purposefully to accomplish their goals” (pg. 230). A message, therefore, can be designed “to allow for multiple interpretations on the part of receivers” (pg. 230), and that benefits organizations in multiple ways. Chief among these is the ability to achieve what Eisenberg calls “unified diversity”, or the “ability (of the people) to maintain individual interpretations while at the same time believing that they are in agreement” (pg. 231). This benefit is crucial for complex, loosely-structured organizations and systems, such as universities.

Strategic ambiguity can also be utilized for other benefits as well. An organization might use ambiguity to facilitate the existence of multiple identity claims, rather than consolidate them, while still maintaining legitimacy (Sillince & Brown, 2009). A private R1 university, for instance, may publicly commit itself to “community engagement” while maintaining other programs that ignore or discourage the practice but are supported by their investors, justifying their actions in the ambiguity present in definitions and expectations of both identities. More recently, Sillince, Jarzabkowski and Shaw (2012) highlighted three specific uses of ambiguity: *protective ambiguity*, which protects specific interests, *invitational ambiguity*, which encourages participation in coordinated action, and *adaptive ambiguity*, in which an organization might temporary adopt specific values to satisfy a particular group. Chapter III indicates that the Carnegie

Foundation was actively utilizing invitational ambiguity in their construction of the Community Engagement Classification. Chapter IV seems to point to the deliberate use of adaptive ambiguity on the part of many R1 universities as they publicly adopt the new classification, perhaps without making any substantive change in structures, programs, or reward systems.

Thus far the various discussions of strategic ambiguity indicate that not only that it is a necessary part of organizing groups with diverse interests, but that the practice is beneficial in many ways. Without seeking to disagree with these assumptions, I think a more complex conception of the practice is necessary. From the rhetorical standpoint introduced in Chapter III, there are potential *negative* ramifications of the use of strategic ambiguity. Laclau (2000) indicates that as more diverse actors tie themselves to the symbols of strategic ambiguity, the “wide variety of concrete demands” asserted will lead to mere “empty signifiers”, bereft of meaning (pg. 210). Thus, on the continuum of clarity, extremely clear messages reduce the possible interested parties but maintain control over the meaning, whereas extreme ambiguity may allow an organization to appeal to a much larger audience but will relegate them to a participant role in the meaning-making process. When the organization in question is dealing with issues of accreditation and legitimacy, they need to maintain a more firm hold over the process so that it remains a valid measure. Subsequently, strategic ambiguity cannot be considered as purely beneficial – organizations have to deal with the ramifications of too judicious an implementation of these rhetorical practices.

This positive bias toward strategic ambiguity can lead organizations to utilize it

without considering the negative consequences of their actions. For the Carnegie Foundation, for instance, “intentionally select[ing]” the term community engagement “to encompass the broadest conception of interactions between higher education and community” (Driscoll, 2009, pg. 6) seems like a good tactic at first blush. They needed to achieve a high enough level of adoption to maintain relevance with their new classification, so “promot[ing] inclusivity” (pg. 6) with strategic ambiguity is a viable approach to achieve this goal. The issue is that large-scale adoption is not their only aim with the Community Engagement Classification. Of the three goals they name, the second is to “engage institutions in a process of inquiry, reflection, and self-assessment”, and the third is to “honor institutions’ achievements while promoting the ongoing development of their programs” (Driscoll, 2008, pg. 39). It is doubtful that a strategy aimed at ‘broadest conceptions’ and ‘inclusivity’ would also be able to ‘promote development’, and by painting with such broad strokes an organization overall is more likely to be content with where they are at rather than engaging in any serious ‘inquiry, reflection, and self-assessment’. Strategic ambiguity, then, cannot be utilized without consideration of how it may impact each of the organizational aims – and it may not all be positive.

### *Legitimation Processes*

This dissertation is rhetorically focused, but it informs the legitimation and mimesis concepts of institutional theory. This coincides with a recent push within institutional theory to bring in aspects of rhetoric and to center processes of institutionalization around communication (Green, Li, & Nohria, 2009; Lammers, 2011;

Suddaby, 2011; Hardy, 2011). The development, emergence, and adoption of the new Community Engagement Classification is closely tied with issues of image and identity management. It has been noted that the processes of legitimation are rhetorical in their very nature (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2009), especially to “establish new legitimacy criteria” (pg. 37) into existing logics. Community engagement, which was not legitimized practice (or was relegated to service) under the dominance of discovery research at R1 institutions, is gaining some traction as the institutional logics gradually shift to include engaged scholarship in its various forms. The classification itself further adds to this process as the Carnegie Foundation leverages its own credibility to legitimize the practice.

Some R1 universities and faculty have benefited from the emergence and adoption of the new Carnegie classification, and institutional theorists have done extensive work referencing the benefits to organizations of new accreditation practices (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002). Theorists have also introduced the concept of institutional work (Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2011), or the efforts involved in attempting to “affect the behavior and beliefs of individuals and collective actors by providing templates for action, cognition, and emotion” (pg. 2). Others have noted that the process of diffusion is also laden with rhetorical strategies that add a persuasive variable to the entire process (Green, 2004). The data analyzed in Chapter IV showed that diffusion and adoption of the new, voluntary classification was dramatically different depending on university mission and funding – land grant schools were much more likely to have applied and received the distinction, whereas private schools lagged



far behind the rest. This would indicate that the rhetorical strategies implemented by the Carnegie Foundation were more persuasive on some R1 groups than others.

What institutional scholars have generally ignored is the idea that the oversight agencies themselves also benefit from compliance, in this case application for certification and adoption of new criteria and procedures (Ritti & Silver, 1986). What this dissertation points out (especially in Chapters II and III) is that the Carnegie Foundation is invested in the visible adoption of their voluntary classification. There will be repercussions if this experiment fails which will affect Carnegie, both on their own credibility and any future plans for similar classifications, so they have implemented rhetorical strategies in shaping both their own narrative and the Community Engagement Classification itself. In this way they have performed their own institutional work, attempting to ensure that the classification gains enough traction to legitimize and thus sustain itself.

Similar conclusions emerge from an application of the organizational “fads and fashions” perspective, which is explicitly rhetorical and yet also is concerned with organizational adoption (Abrahamson, 1991). As a contrast to institutionalization, the diffusion process of the Community Engagement Classification might be seen as a new fad within higher education, certainly within research universities. This perspective would focus on the motivations and processes that are driven by universities themselves, rather than on the Carnegie Foundation. The key difference between fads and fashions and institutional theory is that institutionalization is concerned with the stabilization of practices and policies, whereas fads and fashions – by their very nature – are more

fleeting. The short-term focus, however, is underscored by the larger institutional demands, so subgroups advocating for a new trend (i.e. community engagement, engaged scholarship) must legitimize their efforts within the overlying institutional values (traditional research, publication, etc.). Strategic ambiguity plays a role here, as it enables new ideas to appear more benign and less threatening to the current system.

The primary research done on fads and fashions has been within corporate America (for a concise summary, see Abrahamson, 1991), but it also has been shown to impact higher education (Allen & Chaffee, 1981; Birnbaum, 2000). The new classification does meet the definitional criteria established by Abrahamson (1991), which distinguishes administrative technologies based on the impact of imitation processes (prevalent in higher education) and whether or not organizations within a group determine diffusion (i.e. Carnegie's *voluntary* classification). From this perspective, adoption is driven by an institution's desire to appear legitimate as emergent norms sanction new innovations (Carroll & Hannan, 1989; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), a process that has occurred with the new Community Engagement Classification. This focus on legitimation through adoption leads to symbolic gains, but not necessarily to substantive changes in policy or practice. This is what we are seeing in the later adopters of the Carnegie Classification, who as a group include substantially fewer references to community and engagement within their public tenure and promotion documents, but are happy to tout the distinction in other public spaces, such as their official websites.

Whether adoption is seen as a process of institutionalization or an outgrowth of an emergent fad, legitimization is at its heart. In scenarios of voluntary accreditation

both the governing and the receiving organizations are concerned with their identities, and each is tied up in the classification in question. This unique relationship means that both parties are invested in widespread adoption, as it legitimizes both the creator and the adopter. The more prestigious universities apply for and receive the Community Engagement Classification, the better the Carnegie Foundation looks and the more social capital is gained individually from admittance into the group. This positive spiral benefits each party, but also lends itself to practices that are more concerned with symbolic, rather than substantive, adoption, a process that seems to be occurring with the Community Engagement Classification and R1 universities. In this way the legitimization efforts of both the Carnegie Foundation and the universities themselves build off each other in a symbiotic relationship.

### **Practical Implications**

This dissertation highlights a number of practical concerns for three specific groups: the Carnegie Foundation, universities, and faculty who are interested in engaged scholarship. As the creator of the Community Engagement Classification, the Carnegie Foundation implemented various strategies that enabled adoption, centered on the ambiguity found in the terms “community” and “engagement.” They were thus able to appeal to a broader audience, and accept the applications of schools with varying approaches to working with the external community. Initially this may not have been an issue, as the first responders to their classification were among those most closely aligned with the values overall, but over the years evidence of commitment to community engagement (in the form of public tenure and promotion documents) has

declined among R1 schools. Each iteration, in fact, includes a lower percentage of clear policies on engaged scholarship among newly distinguished universities.

The danger that the use of strategic ambiguity holds for Carnegie is that their initial vetting process becomes the system through which that governing body must respond in the future (Greene, 1998). In other words, they are setting a precedent with the first editions of the classification: the more broadly they award the classification now, the less control they will have in the future over what the terms really mean. The very strategies that have been so crucial in motivating universities to apply for the voluntary classification might prove detrimental to the move toward meaningful community engagement overall. Even with the 2010 adjustments, which required that every university apply again under the combined requirements, nearly every university that held the distinction in 2008 had recertified by 2015, perpetuating the process developed in the first iterations.

The submission of campuses to put themselves through the vetting process realizes and confirms the power of the Carnegie Foundation, but their position is vulnerable. Inasmuch that “(power) only exists in action” (Foucault, 1980, pg. 89), the value institutions still place on the classifications granted by Carnegie is demonstrated and reified each time another university applies for the distinction. This process of maintaining power and relevance reveals how vulnerable an organization like Carnegie can be, however. The execution of this particular classification is particularly troubling in terms of long-term credibility for the organization, because the implementation of policies that support community engagement – policies that the Carnegie Foundation

themselves have pointed to – has been inconsistent and, in some cases, even nonexistent. Clear, consistent metrics allow for an argument to be made regarding accuracy and validity; without them the process is muddled and the results of that process can be strongly refuted and questioned. By designing a technology (using Greene’s terminology) that proves itself ineffective in establishing an identifiable standard of community engagement, the classification itself becomes meaningless. This then reflects on the institution conducting the vetting process and puts them at risk of a similar judgment. For Carnegie to remain relevant in its classification systems, it needs to consistently show that they are able to effectively categorize the organizations of higher education. If they cannot do this, the actions which would otherwise reify their power will serve to undermine it entirely.

In essence, the Carnegie Foundation needs to identify and better define what the Community Engagement Classification is and what it represents. This may mean that more schools get turned down upon application, and it might even mean that some universities who currently have the distinction are given clear guidelines for improvement in order to preserve their status. Once the classification process has some teeth the Foundation will be better suited to not only encourage community engagement and supporting policies, but also to demonstrate their credibility as an accreditation organization. Accomplishing this will enable them to better legitimize those universities that are making strides to become more community engaged, and create a stronger model that can be emulated and adopted elsewhere.

Universities continue struggling to define and reward engaged scholarship and

community outreach, even among those that have outwardly aligned with community engagement through the Carnegie classification. Only 45 R1 universities (40.1%) provide for some version of engaged scholarship, leaving the majority with tenure and promotion structures that not only prioritize discovery research, but actually exclude the other approach entirely. Without systems in place that encourage and enable faculty to work more closely with their external communities, it is doubtful that more than a few will endeavor to do so (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). This has long-term implications for higher education overall, as the research areas and methods generated by faculty early in their career form the basis of their academic identity – without opportunities to learn and practice engaged scholarship as they develop there is little motivation for them to suddenly begin that type of work once tenure has been established. It is unclear as to how universities that do include provisions for engaged scholarship within their general tenure and promotion guideline translate that downward into specific faculty cases for advancement, but if the lived experience of engaged scholars (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008) is any indication, then there is still a lot of room for improvement.

The future is not completely bleak for faculty that desire to do engaged scholarship as a primary focus. The number of universities that explicitly reward this type of research is a minority, but among the 45 that do, 35 of them (77.8%) place engaged scholarship as a higher priority than service or professional activity, and 31 (68.9%) include it as a part of research. It is at these schools that headway can be made, as they have already indicated in their public documents a desire to pursue a more collaborative approach with the community. The focus at these universities should be to

help those policies trickle down to the department level, and then to ensure that, in practice, the pursuit of community engagement is given real weight in tenure cases. This is easier said than done, because the subjective nature of judging engaged scholarship is still an issue, and demonstrating public impact is difficult at best.

The effort to design solid metrics which would reflect impact is a difficult one, but researchers are making the attempt at identifying specifics that could be used (see Barge, in press). If engaged scholars want their work to be taken seriously, with the eventual aim to be considered as a viable alternative to a traditional career of discovery research, they need to establish and legitimize appropriate evaluative criteria. Only by identifying this criteria and applying it with sufficient rigor (to ensure that only the highest quality engaged research is published) will enable engaged scholars to overcome the inertia that currently governs tenure and promotion processes. It is up to faculty who are already performing this type of work to better define its parameters and help establish a clearer pathway for budding researchers in this area.

### **Future Research**

While the possibilities with engaged scholarship and community engagement are essentially unlimited, especially by branching out to other types of universities (i.e. Master's, Baccalaureate, specialty, etc.), there are a few key directions of research that could aid and enrich the studies done here on R1 universities:

#### *Limitation and Direction #1: Cross-Field Influence.*

One of the limitations to the present study is that I analyzed the R1 group as a whole, without mapping the specific relationships between R1 universities.

Organizational imprinting, which is the long term effect of environmental factors surrounding the founding of an organization (Stinchcombe, 1965), has been noted to impact peer networks within an industry (Marquis, 2003). In other words, not only does the history of an organization impact their mission for the future, the history of a network group will impact how it develops over time. In institutions of higher education, not every R1 university is evenly influenced by the actions of every other R1, nor does every land grant institution compare itself to every other land grant. Rather, each has identified a smaller group of peers to which it looks and by which it evaluates the quality of its programs, initiatives, and faculty. These peer institutions may or may not share the same mission or funding model, but may rather have been selected strategically to justify certain initiatives early on or have been the product of proximity and competition.

Network imprinting would suggest that these peer groups were established near the beginning of a university's history and have since been largely maintained. That they would continue to have an effect on organizational development is at the heart of network analysis (Wellman, 1983; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Scott, 2012).

Subsequently, future research could analyze the various networks of the self-identified peer institutions that weave through and connect the various R1 schools, especially among recipients of the Community Engagement distinction. This type of study could look at diffusion in terms of the various peer networks, analyzing whether they have any bearing on which universities adopted during which year. It could also evaluate tenure and promotion policies regarding the larger community and engagement within peer networks to see if peers influence each other in the generation of official guidelines. If a



relationship can be identified, it might explain why the adoption of the Community Engagement Classification is especially pronounced among land grant and public schools, but also has been adopted by some private universities (as well as why others haven't applied for the distinction at all or adopted policies about engagement). Peer networks established over a century ago might still be intact despite some diversification in university mission and funding structure.

*Limitation and Direction #2: Rhetorical Tenure and Promotion Policies.*

Another limitation to this dissertation was that it looked at tenure and promotion at the surface level, analyzing public, general policies. The public nature of these documents may or may not represent actual practices within the universities themselves. For example, these documents treated teaching and research as equally important, an equation that is understandable for a document that is available to stakeholders who have criticized universities for slighting teaching (recall Chapter II). It is doubtful however, that the two are treated as equally important in actual promotion and tenure cases at R1 institutions: professors with a fabulous teaching record would not last very long without an impressive publication list on their dossiers, but an outstanding history of research can certainly eclipse even very poor teaching at many (if not all) of these schools. The presence of such policies in public documents may be an image management strategy. Westphal and Zajac (1998) found that the stock market reacted favorably to corporations that adopted certain policies regardless of whether or not they actually implemented them. It was the announcement and symbolic adoption that was viewed favorably by stakeholders. In a similar fashion, universities' tenure and promotion documents may be

strategically aligned with not only teaching, but also community engagement in order to satisfy a number of stakeholders, regardless of whether or not they actually intend on making any substantive change. This is a clear example of organizational decoupling, or the emergence of a gap between official policies and actual practice within an organization (Westphal & Zajac, 2001).

Decoupling emerges as an organizational response to two different problems: first, the rationale (“rationalized myths”, see Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Boxenbaum, & Jonsson, 2008) surrounding the new policies may not create more efficient solutions, and second, organizations may adhere to multiple, conflicting logics. Institutions of higher education are prime locations for both problems, but the latter is especially prevalent as they exist as “loosely coupled systems” (Weick, 1976), where the different elements that make up universities are interdependent but not tightly tied together. It follows, then, that how tenure and promotion guidelines get translated and implemented from the institutional level down may be very different throughout the various colleges and departments within a university. Some practices at the lower levels may be closely tied to the public policies, while others may adapt or abandon them entirely to suit their needs.

By limiting the cases down to a single institution or a small group and then doing a full study on implementation, a researcher could get a clearer picture of how official policy affects tenure criteria on the ground. Most universities allow the various sublevels to design their own documents and standards based loosely on the organizational guidelines. Although some information such as the conversations surrounding specific

tenure cases would be very difficult or nearly impossible to obtain, other information wouldn't be so guarded and may be easier to obtain: the policies written throughout the university could be evaluated, interviews could be conducted with administrators and faculty that have served on review boards, and professors actively engaging with communities could be surveyed on their experiences with advancement and validation. It is likely that the level of decoupling from public policies on community engagement and engaged scholarship varies from department to department as they interact with competing institutional logics from the university, college, and profession (Pache & Santos, 2013). Even in universities where the adoption was largely symbolic it is likely that some trickle-down would occur, as has been noted to occur in past studies of decoupled organizations (Bromley & Powell, 2012). A project like this would provide rich data from a few cases that would add depth to the studies in this dissertation.

Another project could look at R1 tenure and promotion policies as public documents, rather than internal standards. In their treatment of teaching and research it is clear that tenure and promotion documents must not be exclusively directed toward internal faculty, whose careers presumably do not benefit from equal efforts in pedagogy and research (unless both levels are very high). As rhetorical documents, they must be aimed at a particular audience (or audiences) to be persuasive (Corbett, 1965), but which groups are being targeted? In his description of the American research university, Kerr (1963) announced that it was "so many different things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself" (pg. 8). Those "different people" are the various stakeholders that invested in the institutions themselves, and include

administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students, family of students, local communities, state and federal governments, and investors. These groups are frequently at odds and none of these groups is internally consistent in their own demands, but one or more of them must be the target of the rhetoric within the public policies. A study aimed at uncovering the various audiences toward which the tenure and promotion documents are designed would complement the findings of this dissertation and enrich our understanding of the policies themselves.

*Limitation and Direction #3: Carnegie's Vetting Process.*

A third limitation of this dissertation was its inability to tap into the actual vetting process of the Carnegie Foundation. The application document and various websites are informative, but leave the actual process largely unexamined. As noted in Chapter III, the Community Engagement Classification was designed to encompass varying approaches to community engagement, and did so at risk of defining it so broadly that it has the potential to lose significance (McGee, 1980; Laclau, 2000). For an accreditation organization, the “wide variety of concrete demands” (Laclau, 2000, pg. 210) is surely difficult to navigate, but invariably they must make choices and prioritize between them. Future research could collaborate with the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University, which – as of the beginning of 2017 – has taken over the management of the Community Engagement Classification application process. Working closely with them and/or the other groups that have handled the process in the past (the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts, for example) could shed some light on how tenure and promotion policies factor into the overall

application process for universities. It could also reveal the types of engagement programs that might not be accounted for in the specific language of tenure and promotion documents analyzed in this study, but which are, in fact, viable options for scholarship within the various reward systems, as universities demonstrate their commitment to engagement within the application itself.

It is not particularly surprising that the actual selection processes are ambiguous. The Carnegie Foundation and their supporting groups are managing a huge amount of knowledge and the group is made up of highly educated individuals, making them very similar to “knowledge-intensive companies” (Alvesson, 1993; 2001). In these organizations ambiguity is high and the importance of rhetoric and image management becomes central to what they do. In Carnegie’s case, the ambiguity in their own process and the classification overall means that they have to do extra work to construct a credible identity. The public image work was analyzed in Chapter II, but it should be salient in the vetting process itself as well. Amy Driscoll continues to be the key liaison between these groups and the Carnegie Foundation, and her insights would be invaluable for a project like this. So far they have been successful in their execution of the classification process (as applications continue to file in and the list continues to grow), so the sensemaking process which has taken place through the previous classifications should continue to impact how they process the applications (see Weick, 1995). Interviews with her and others who have been with the project from the beginning would tap into how they see themselves, their relationship with universities (especially R1s), and the classification itself. The way in which they have negotiated and leveraged their

identity and that of the Carnegie Classifications to aid in the adoption of the new, voluntary distinction would surely have impacted and continues to affect the vetting process.

*Limitation and Direction #4: Longitudinal Study.*

Finally, the analyses presented in this dissertation are constrained temporally. The tenure and promotion information used for analysis is a snapshot of data collected over a few months at the end of 2016. As it stands right now, there is a division between the tenure and promotion documents of universities that adopted the Community Engagement Classification early on and those that received the distinction later. It appears that those adopting earlier are more committed to community engagement, or at least they are more willing to support it in their public promotion and tenure documents. As noted in Chapter IV, uncertainty is a factor that affects adoption practices. It is a factor in initial reticence (Jensen, 1982), as evidenced by the slow adoption among private universities, but once adoption becomes more prevalent – such as within land grant R1s – it leads to mimesis (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), which is more concerned with the appearance of legitimacy than substantive change. This is similar to what happened as total quality management (TQM) was institutionalized: the initial adopters were interested in the tangible benefits of the new strategy, whereas those that adopted late were more likely to join for the legitimacy benefit and made less substantive changes to their practice (Westphal, Gulati, & Shortell, 1997).

The rhetoric enacted to legitimize the adoption of TQM also shifted away from substantive, logical arguments to mere claims of legitimation (Green et al., 2009). In

other words, the persuasive arguments for adoption, which initially were focused on the benefits of the implementation of TQM, became localized around adopting a program that was widespread throughout the industry. Judging by the adoption patterns and tenure and promotion documents in Chapter IV it appears that the same process is occurring with the new Carnegie classification, but the static nature of the data may be misleading.

While the TQM studies indicate that later adopters might be more concerned with the symbolic adoption, substantive change can and may actually follow (Bromley & Powell, 2012). Time may show that it just takes a couple years for tenure and promotion policies to catch up with the identity management work of receiving the distinction. In 2020 another iteration of the Community Engagement Classification is set to be published, and another study similar to this one could be (and should be) conducted. The added variable of time would enhance the data, and comparisons from one year to another in terms of tenure and promotion documents and statements on engaged scholarship would be informative in developing models on university change and the diffusion of engagement.

### **Final Thoughts**

In many ways this dissertation starts a conversation rather than ends one – primarily it builds from research done by rhetoricians and engaged scholars as well as the efforts made by the Carnegie Foundation in order to give a picture of the current state of the Community Engagement Classification. The classification could, in the long term, prove to be a boon to faculty attempting to collaborate with community partners,

but it also has the potential to create one more PR buffer between the public and traditional discovery research. The distinction could, with time, develop into a symbol for engaged scholars indicating which schools are most likely to support them in their efforts, but it could also continue to mislead hopefuls into another system of internal service and publication. Much of this is up to those implementing the classification program, but projects like this dissertation and calls for change made in other academic venues will continue to encourage universities to be more transparent about how engagement is conceptualized and assessed.

While many tenure and promotion documents at R1 universities do account for community outreach, they continue to be limited in their scope. Most relegate that type of work to the low priority service activities, discouraging faculty from allocating their resources in that direction. Where engaged scholarship is mentioned it is narrowly defined, favoring only one or two faces and only rarely accounting for true community collaboration. But it *is* included in many policies. It may be that engaged scholars need to spend less time explaining themselves and more time leveraging their own university policies to gain recognition for the impact they are having on both theory and practice. Adoption of the Community Engagement Classification and tenure and promotion policies that give space for engaged scholarship are both opportunities for faculty interested in working with the external community to validate their work. As academia focuses more and more on relevance, it is on the academics themselves – both administrators and researchers – to make this shift a reality.



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